Viz Graphic Novel

PANESE COMICS FROM A UNIQUELY FEMALE PERSPECTIVE

FOUR SHŌJO STORIES

It's Not Just Girls' Stuff Anymore

ROMISE
by
iko Nishi

THEY WERE 11
by
Moto Hagio

THE CHANGELING
by
Shio Sato

SINCE YOU'VE BEEN GONE
by
Keiko Nishi

VIZ GRAPHIC NOVEL

FOUR SHŌJO STORIES™

PROMISE
STORY & ART BY KEIKO NISHI

THEY WERE ELEVEN
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INTRODUCTION

By Matt Thorn

I recently came across a piece in the *New York Times* that made me cringe. Featured on page one of the "Week in Review" section, the half-inch-high headline proclaimed, "In Japan, Brutal Comics for Women," and then, in smaller print, "Mass Market Rape Fantasies." Chock-full of disinformation, distortions, half-truths, and quotes from "experts" of dubious qualification, the article was yet another attempt of the American mass media to portray Japanese society as sick, and Japanese women as so hopelessly oppressed as to have no identity beyond that defined for them by misogynist, despotic, Japanese men. This article was particularly discouraging to me because it seemed to undo in one careless, mean-spirited gesture my own humble efforts over the past several years to increase awareness and understanding in the English-reading world of the fascinating and complex genre of shōjo manga, comics created by Japanese women for Japanese girls and women.

Why condescending, caricatured images of Japanese women persist in the American media and the American popular mind is a question I won't try to address here (though friends and family have heard me rant on the subject often enough), but I hope that this volume—the first of its kind, as far as I know—will represent a small step towards countering that image with one of Japanese women who, despite being confronted with tenacious sexism (In what society aren't they?), are creative, thoughtful, and actively contributing to Japanese—and even global—society and culture in important ways.

The three artists represented here—Moto Hagio, Shio Sato, and Keiko Nishi—are such women. Hagio is the senior of the three, and may be the most beloved shōjo manga artist of all time. I recently attended the big end-of-the-year party at Shogakukan Publishing's manga division, and every time I saw Hagio she was signing autographs for young (and visibly awed) artists, most of whom were probably too young to have read such Hagio classics as *The Poe Clan* (1976), *The Heart of Thomas* (1974), or *They Were Eleven* (1976) when they were originally serialized. Hagio is one of a group of female artists (known as the "Magnificent Forty-Niners" because most were born in 1949) who debuted in the late sixties, when shōjo manga were still drawn primarily by male artists. These women revolutionized the genre. Taking up such themes as gender and sexuality, and developing subgenres such as science fiction that had long been

defined as "boys' stuff," Hagio and her peers took a simple and lowly regarded genre geared at primary school girls and made it into a sophisticated medium for women's expression that appealed to older and broader audiences

Shio Sato is a unique artist who for some two decades has quietly pursued her own distinctive brand of science fiction on the periphery of the shōjo manga mainstream, in the process developing a loyal following and garnering the respect of manga critics and fellow artists Whereas Hagio is outgoing and always on the move (she loves travel and karaoke), Sato is studious almost to the point of being reclusive, and seems to enjoy nothing more than reading at home Translating her manga *The Changeling* was an enormous challenge, because it is packed with obscure references to religion, philosophy, science, and parapsychology that I could never have completely deciphered without Sato's patient and friendly help As a student of anthropology, however, I have always been most impressed by Sato's ability to create what might be called "ethnographic plausibility" Whereas many science fiction writers and artists never manage to escape the world view of their own societies, Sato manages to create worlds that are entirely fresh, yet which have an internal cultural logic that would satisfy the most experienced anthropologist.

Keiko Nishi has also followed an unorthodox path to success Bypassing the high circulation, teen-oriented shōjo manga magazines and steadfastly refusing to bind herself to a single publisher, in less than a decade she has become one of the most popular and respected artists of her (twenty-something) generation The two stories presented here, *Promise* and *Since You've Been Gone*, are representative of her earlier works, which are characterized by raw—even frightening—emotion, and by themes of alienation and making peace with one's ghosts In recent years, her work has mellowed and matured, and while some readers miss the intensity of her earlier work, many new readers have been attracted to her newfound (and quirky) sense of humor, as well as to her recent thought provoking, yet unpretentious, philosophical motifs She is currently working on two popular series, both of which are far longer than any of her previous stories *The Beauty in the Hagiwara Shop in District No 3*, in the magazine *Wings*, and *Rosemary Hotel Rooms to Let*, in the magazine *Petit Flower*

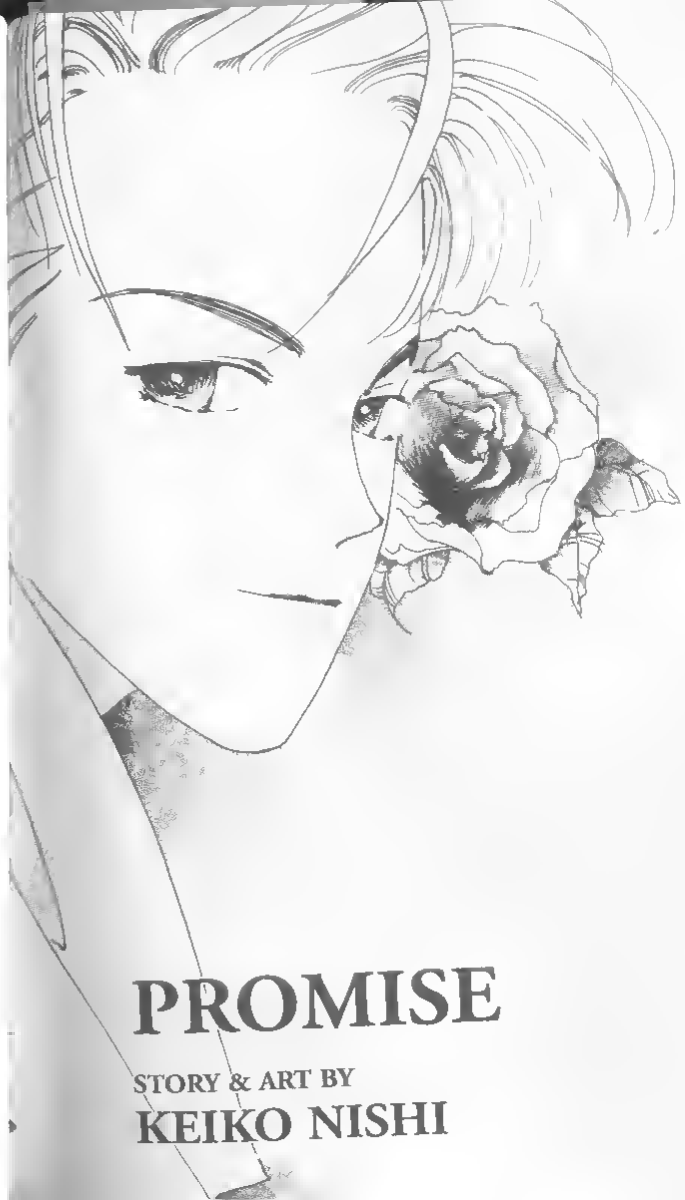
I can hardly claim that these works or artists are representative of shōjo manga as a whole, but in such an enormous and diverse genre, no single volume could ever make such a claim. They were chosen for a variety of reasons, including practical considerations, such as access to translation rights and the realities of the English-language comics market But first and foremost they were chosen for their quality. Like any other mass-produced, popular medium, shōjo manga include a lot of works that have no more lasting value than last summer's Hollywood blockbuster or the bulk of American sitcoms But because every shōjo manga is ultimately the creation of one artist working with one editor and a small staff of assistants, the genre is far less susceptible to the kind of corporate homogenization and executive meddling that afflicts complex, high-tech media such as commercial film and television Even in the most cliched, potboiler shojo manga, the creativity of the individual artist cannot help but shine through

This is perhaps the most remarkable aspect of this genre—an aspect that was completely overlooked in that dreadful *New York Times* article shojo manga is a commercially lucrative genre that provides Japanese women not only with an outlet for creative expression, but economic autonomy and the respect of society as well. Further, because it is so popular, it allows female artists to collectively reach practically every Japanese girl and to convey a message to, or even serve as role models for, those girls So powerful is this genre that even tens of thousands of women and girls who can't make a living from manga have developed a vibrant and popular amateur manga market in which they can express themselves free of any editorial or commercial constraints Even these amateur artists enjoy the loyalty of hundreds of thousands of readers across Japan, and many even manage to make a profit or break into the 'pros"

Seen in this light, Japan s comics for girls and women are not a means of imposing patriarchal definitions of femininity on passive "Madame (or Miss) Butterflies," but a unique forum in which Japanese girls and women can discuss and debate among each other (and now you) what it means to be a Japanese girl, a woman, a human being in relationships with other human beings

Can you think of an American parallel?

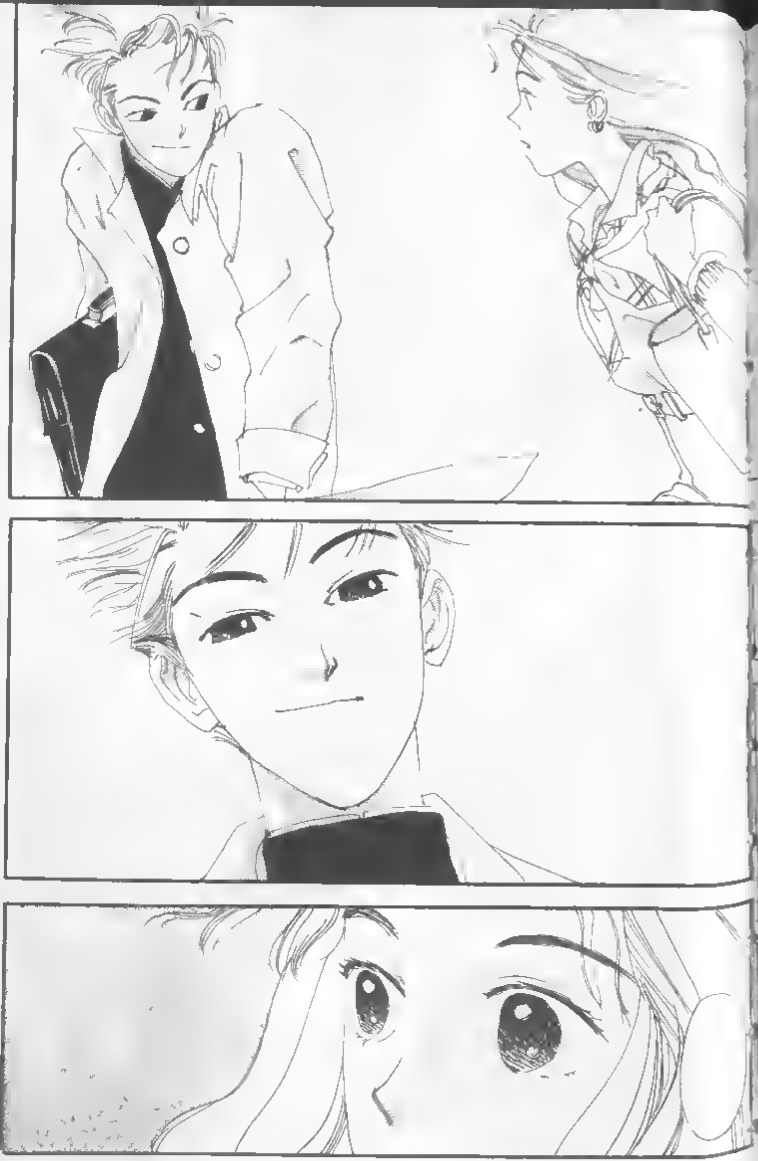
Matt Thorn is earning a Ph D in anthropology at Columbia University, his dissertation is on Japanese shōjo manga His translations for Viz Comics include Four Shojo Stories, A, A' (A, A Prime), Sanctuary Nausicaa of the Valley of Wind, Horobi 2001 Nights, Mermaid Forest, and Mermaid's Scar



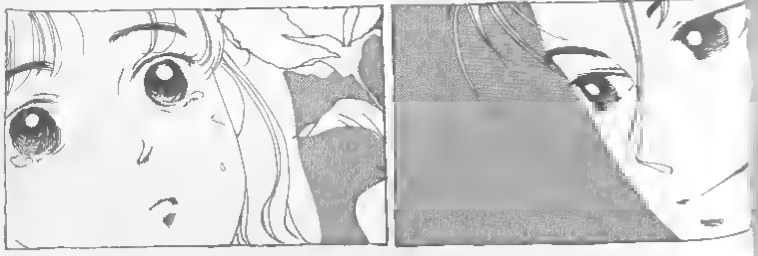
PROMISE

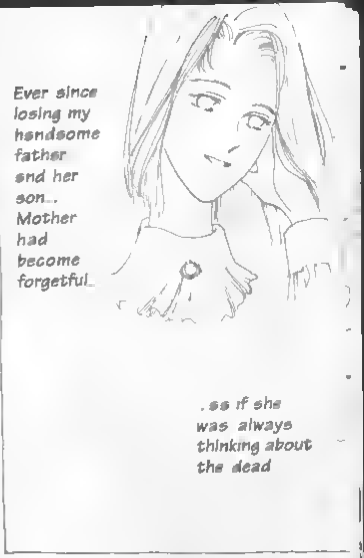
STORY & ART BY
KEIKO NISHI

I promise.
I'll come back to see you again.



MA-
MA-A A!
MA-
MA...




Ever since losing my handsome father and her son... Mother had become forgetful...
...as if she was always thinking about the dead

I tried to tell my mother about the boy, but she wouldn't listen.

She just scolded me for following a stranger

In time, my memory faded
A TRAIN IS ARRIVING PLEASE STAY WITHIN THE WHITE LINE
友梨クリニック
until finally I forgot all about that boy

Eh-heh
Not many people on the train this time of day
Now how am I going to explain this?
A sudden stomach ache? My mother's sick and I had to take care of her?
FLUMP
I wonder if he's late, too

RRRR
GIRLS
WINTER·BARGAINS
BIG·XMAS·SALE
EPARTMENT STOR
JUNKO MAPA
"My, what a coincidence"
"R-Reiko, honey, I meant to introduce you sooner, but, um,"
"S-so you're Reiko! I've heard a lot about you"
"Actually, we were just looking at this dress and wondering how you'd like it."
JUNKO MAPA
"It's really cute it has lace and these nice shoulder straps See?"
"Well, you two just take your time I'm going home."
"Reiko! Wait! Actually Toshiharu's son is one of your class--"
Hmph. She knows I wear "Junko."
What does she mean, "lace" and "shoulder straps"!?

it's not like I expect her to stay a widow for the rest of her life
it's just that...
...I didn't want to find out like that
I would have a hard time explaining that I was late for school..
PAPAP
...because I was wandering around town thinking about that
SWISH
Oh, no
This guy's a weirdo

Wait a second!
EEK!
Oh, gross! Wait--
WHUMP
WH-WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING!?
HUH!?
YOU JUST GOTTA KICK 'EM.
LIKE THAT
26EE
Y-YOU EXPECT ME TO DO THAT!?
ICHIGAYA!
ICHI-GAYA!
ouch!
WELL, UM, ANYWAY-- THANKS
YOU'RE WELCOME
THIS IS MY STOP
KEEP THAT LOWER HALF GUARDED
That wasn't the only time we met
I'm always skipping school, and for some reason I run into him a lot on the train

REIKO?
UM, LEAVING SCHOOL EARLY TODAY?
N-NOT FEELING WELL?
I'M FINE
HMM. YOU SEE, I'M SUPPOSED TO WRITE DOWN YOUR REASON FOR LEAVING EARLY, SO...
WRITE WHATEVER YOU LIKE SAY I'VE GOT A COLD OR SOMETHING
WELL BUT IT DOESN'T LOOK GOOD, YOU KNOW ALWAYS CUTTING CLASS LIKE THIS UM...
OOPS. CAN'T TALK NOW I'LL BE LATE FOR THE CONCERT
Toshihiko Hiraki -- our class president
HAH-HA A A SHE BLEW YOU OFF TOSHI!
NICE GOIN' ACE!
For some reason seems to be payi a lot of attention to me recently
Come to think of it, I don't think I've talked to Mom once since then.
Maybe it's not such a good idea for two women our ages to live alone in one place... even though we are mother and daughter
But then again, adding new members to the family would just make things more complicated
Maybe...
Maybe I just don't need a family anymore.
I've already lost two family members anyway.
YO!

CUTTING CLASS?
AH!
YEAH.
YOU'RE ALWAYS ALONE, AREN'T YOU?
FLICK
WELL, SO ARE YOU
I'M GETTING OFF AT THE NEXT STOP
WHERE RE YOU GOING?
A CONCERT
OH, YEAH? ALONE?
COME ON, HAVEN'T YOU GOT ANY FRIENDS TO GO WITH?
SO YOU GO ALONE, YOU DANCE ALONE, YOU GO HOME ALONE HUH?
HMMM
WELL, HAVE A GOOD TIME ALL ALONE
BYE-BYE
WHAT THE!?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE!?
GEE, YOU'RE REAL SWEET, AREN'T YOU!?

WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
JUST CALL ME "TARO."
LET ME GUESS YOUR NAME
"REIKO."
WHA--!? HOW DID YOU KNOW!?
WHAT? YOU MEAN I WAS RIGHT?
WHAT DO YOU DO ABOUT SCHOOL, TARO?
SAME AS YOU
IF I DIDN'T, WE WOULDN'T RUN INTO EACH OTHER LIKE THIS, WOULD WE?
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT
WHERE DO YOU LIVE?
WHERE SHOULD I GO IF I WANT TO SEE YOU?

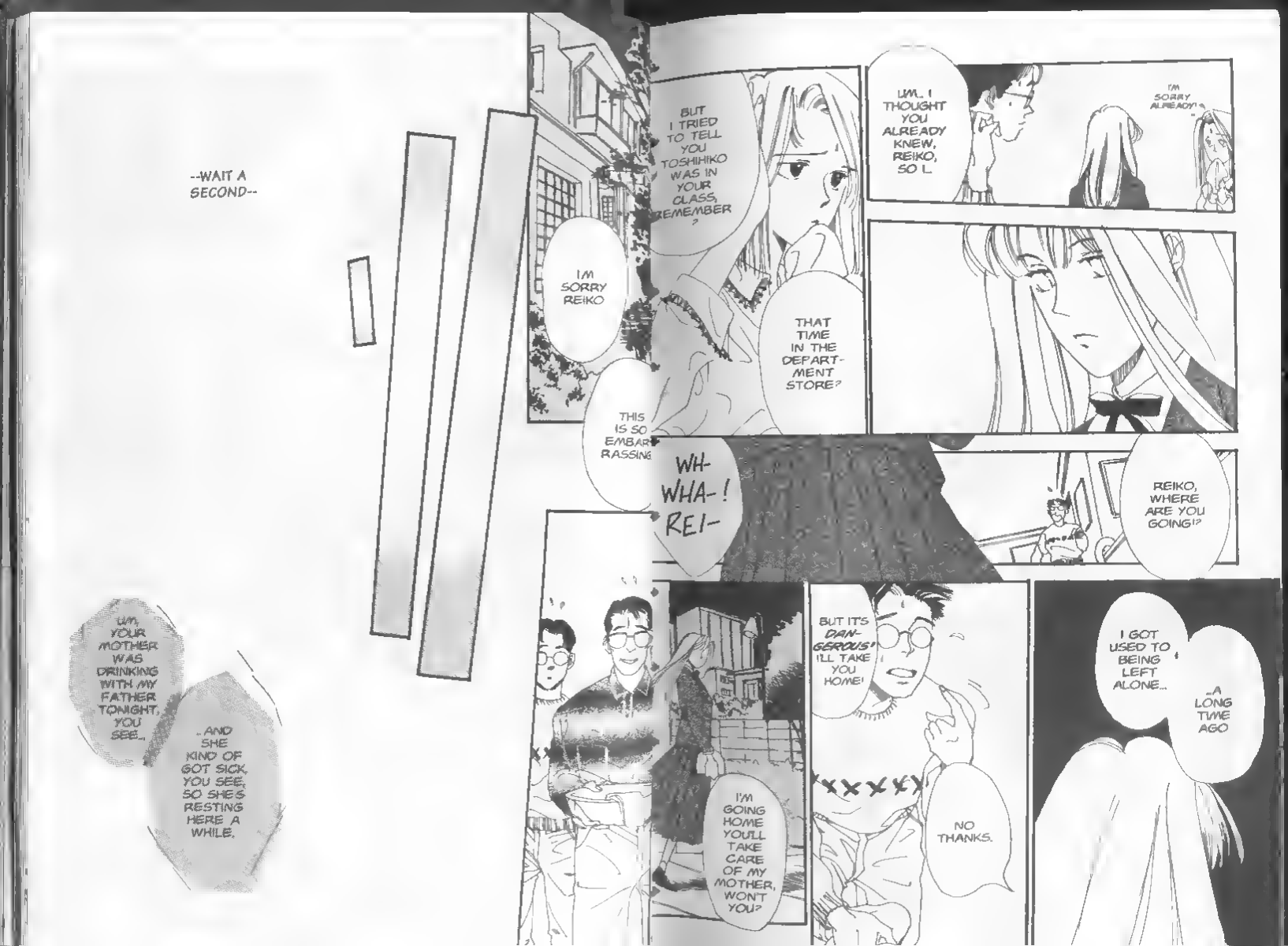
NOT TELLING
IF I TELL..
..YOU'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO SEE ME AGAIN
WHY?
FAP
ALL RIGHT I WON'T ASK

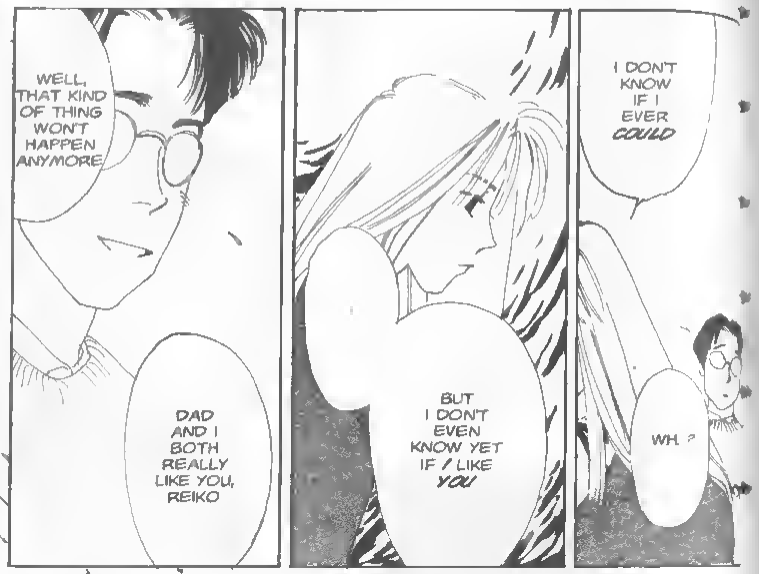
OKAY
COME ON
Every time we met after that, we would do something together

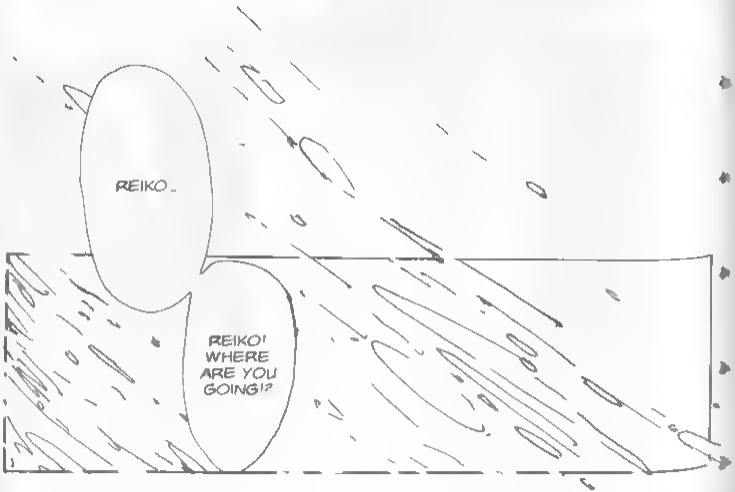
If we met in the morning, we'd play all day
If we met in the evening, we'd stay out till morning.
We had so much fun just being together.
STADIUM
HM
WHAT?
DON'T YOU THINK..
..WE LOOK A LOT ALIKE?
ahhh
I MEAN-

WOULD YOU QUIT SCREWING AROUND!?
NOW LOOK!
YEE OUCH!
THE WAY WE'RE BUILT
OUR HAIR
MAYBE WE'RE ACTUALLY DISTANTLY RELATED
OR MAYBE WE WERE THE SAME CREATURE IN A PREVIOUS LIFE
MAYBE THIS IS WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE.. IF MY BROTHER HAD LIVED
YOU SEE, I'M ONE OF A PAIR OF TWINS
IT WAS A REALLY DIFFICULT BIRTH THEY SAY THAT WHEN THEY PULLED HIM OUT MY BROTHER WAS ALREADY GONE
WAHH!
WAHH!
TAP TAP
SO IT'S NOT SO MUCH..
THAT MY BROTHER DIED
IT'S LIKE HE WAS NEVER BORN
SOME-TIMES I THINK
..."WHAT IF IT HAD BEEN ME WHO WAS NEVER BORN?"
THEN I WOULDN'T HAVE TO DEAL WITH ALL THIS FAMILY TROUBLE
I WOULDN'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT STUPID THINGS
YOU KNOW?
BUT REIKO...
WHAT ABOUT YOUR BROTHER'S FEELINGS?
MAYBE YOUR BROTHER WOULD HAVE WISHED FOR THE CHANCE...
..TO DEAL WITH FAMILY TROUBLE... AND WORRY ABOUT STUPID THINGS.

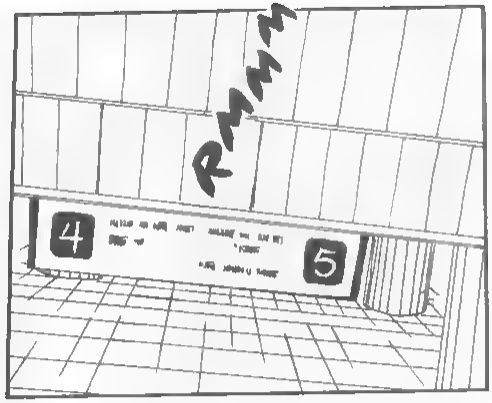
THE DAY WILL COME...
WHEN YOU'LL THINK, "I'M GLAD I WAS BORN."
"I'M GLAD I HAVE A FAMILY." I KNOW IT WILL
I DON'T KNOW WHEN THAT WILL BE, BUT...
IT'S A HIT!!
KLANG-G-G
TAP TAP
OHHHH
WAHHH!!
310 CHIHARU & REIKO KITAJO
KREE
I'M HOME...
NOT THAT YOU'D BE AWAKE
HM?
SHE'S NOT HERE?
WHAT THE -?
WHERE THE HELL DID SHE GO!?
RAZZLE-DAZZLE
HELLO, KITAJO RESIDENCE
AH! YOU'RE FINALLY HOME!!
THIS IS TOSHIHIKO HIRAKI WE'RE IN THE SAME CLASS.
UMM, YOUR MOTHER IS HERE AT OUR PLACE

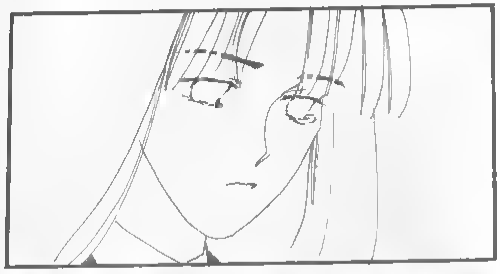

--WAIT A SECOND--
UM, YOUR MOTHER WAS DRINKING WITH MY FATHER TONIGHT, YOU SEE..
..AND SHE KIND OF GOT SICK, YOU SEE, SO SHE'S RESTING HERE A WHILE.
I'M GOING HOME YOU'LL TAKE CARE OF MY MOTHER, WON'T YOU?
BUT IT'S DANGEROUS! I'LL TAKE YOU HOME!
NO THANKS.
I GOT USED TO BEING LEFT ALONE..
..A LONG TIME AGO
WH-WHA-! REI-
REIKO, WHERE ARE YOU GOING!?
UM.. I THOUGHT YOU ALREADY KNEW, REIKO, SO I..
I'M SORRY ALREADY!
BUT I TRIED TO TELL YOU TOSHIHIKO WAS IN YOUR CLASS, REMEMBER?
I'M SORRY REIKO
THAT TIME IN THE DEPARTMENT STORE?
THIS IS SO EMBARRASSING


WELL, THAT KIND OF THING WON'T HAPPEN ANYMORE
DAD AND I BOTH REALLY LIKE YOU, REIKO
BUT I DON'T EVEN KNOW YET IF I LIKE YOU
I DON'T KNOW IF I EVER COULD
WH..?


REIKO..
REIKO! WHERE ARE YOU GOING!?

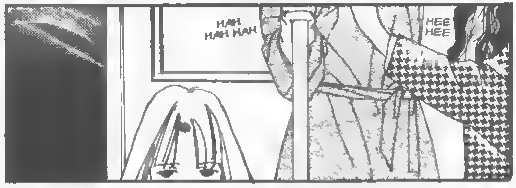
RMMM


RMMM
4
5



I.
I don't want to go home
I really don't need a family anymore

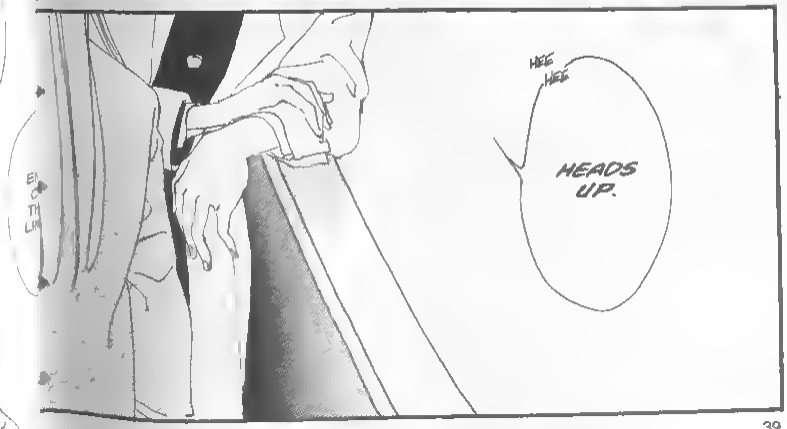
AH HAH! HAH!
HEH HEH
WHAT A LOSER!
PLEASE DO NOT TRY TO BOARD THE TRAIN ONCE THE DOORS HAVE BEGUN TO CLOSE.
WEEKLY SUNDAY
I KNOW I'M DRUNK, YAMAGUCHI, BUT JUST HEAR ME OUT.


HAH HAH HAH
HEE HEE

ZZZZ

MISS?

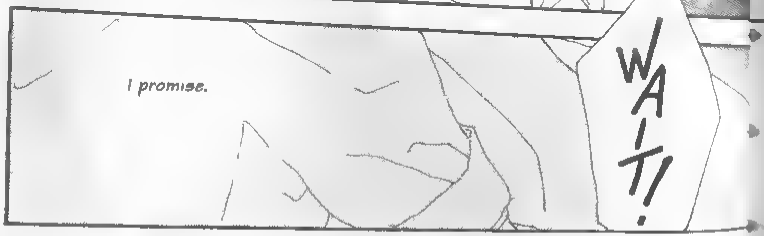
RUMBLE


HEE HEE
HEADS UP.

I CAN'T
BUT... WHY?
WHA-??
THAT'S WHAT I CAME TO TELL YOU
IT'S TIME FOR ME TO DISAPPEAR
NOW THAT YOU'VE GOT SOMEONE WHO'S TRYING AS HARD AS HE CAN TO UNDER STAND YOU...
YOU'RE OKAY NOW
I DON'T CARE WHERE...
...JUST TAKE ME SOME-WHERE!

BUT YOU CAN'T JUST
DON'T GO! TAKE ME WITH YOU!
I CAN'T, REIKO
I REALLY CAN'T

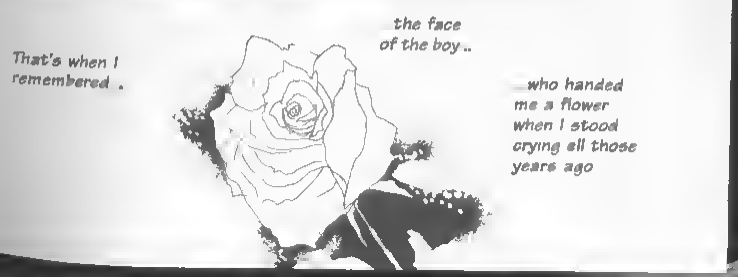
SOME DAY, WHEN YOU'VE FOUND HAPPINESS_
..I'LL COME BACK TO SEE YOU ONE LAST TIME
WAIT!


I promise.
WAIT!!

SQUEE
SQUEE
SQUEE

KREE
RE
REIKO !!
KSHH
IMP
AH THA
THANK GOODNESS YOU'RE ALL RIGHT

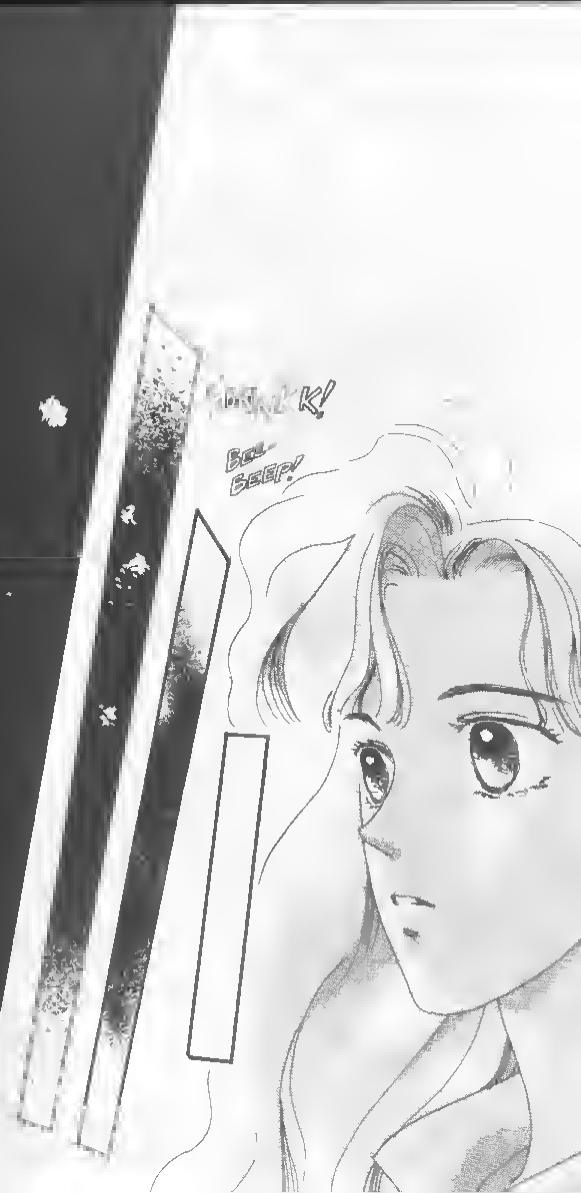
SNIF
SNIF
HM?
WHERE'D THE FLOWER COME FROM?

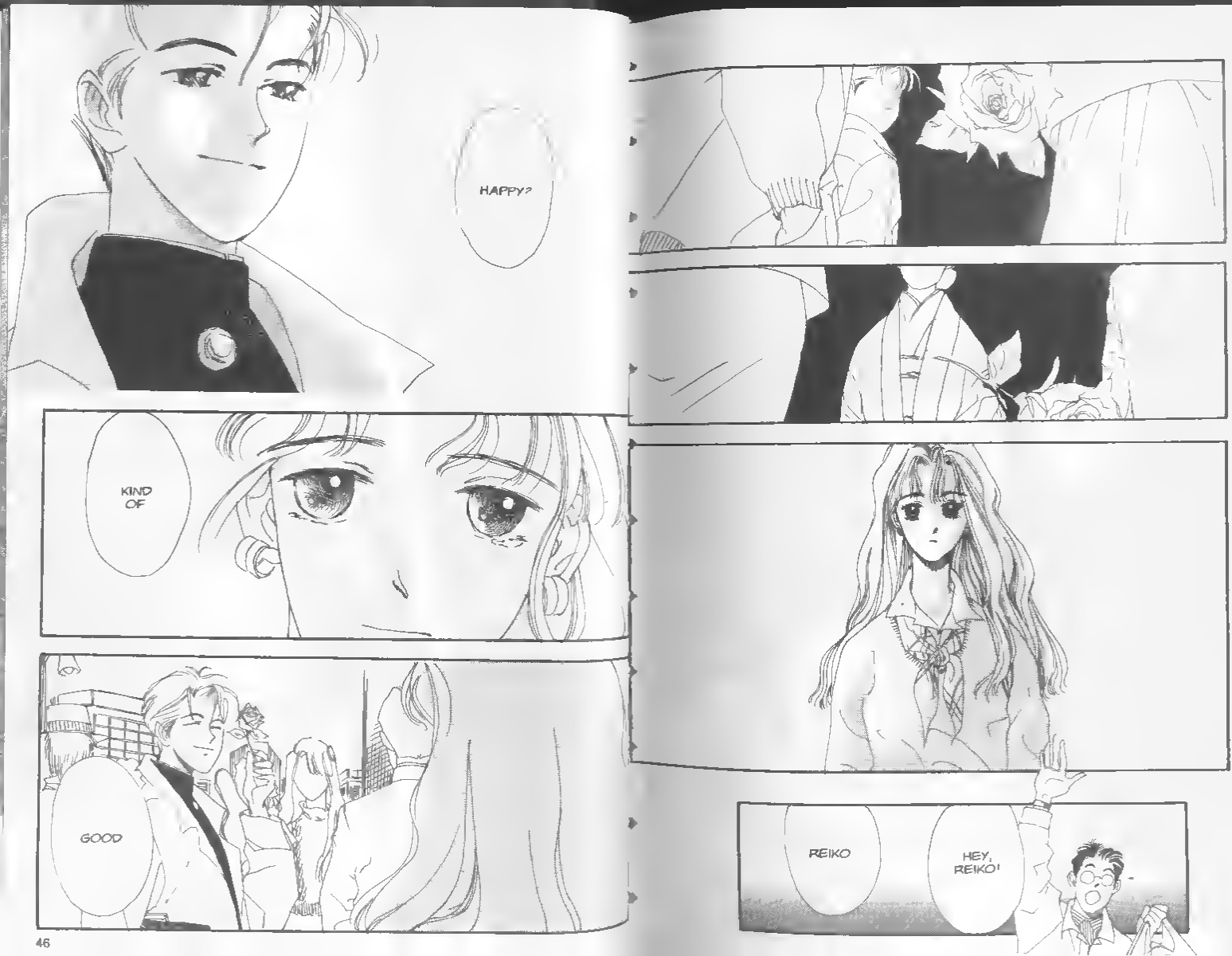

That's when I remembered ..
..the face of the boy..
..who handed me a flower when I stood crying all those years ago

Toshihiko, who rode his bike around in the snow all day looking for me

..believed this story...

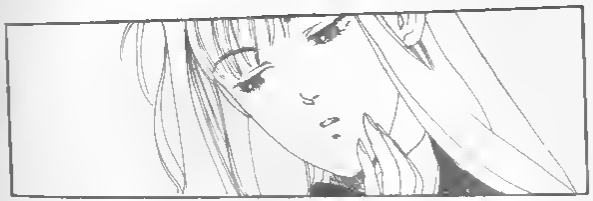
. a story that no one else would ever believe




HAPPY?
KIND OF
GOOD
REIKO
HEY, REIKO!

WE BETTER HURRY HOME WE'VE GOT TO GET READY FOR THE PARTY!
HM? WHERE'D THE FLOWER COME FROM?
PRETTY, ISN'T IT?
WE CAN PUT IT IN THE CENTER OF THE TABLE

THE END



THEY WERE ELEVEN

STORY & ART BY
MOTO HAGIO

Terran History

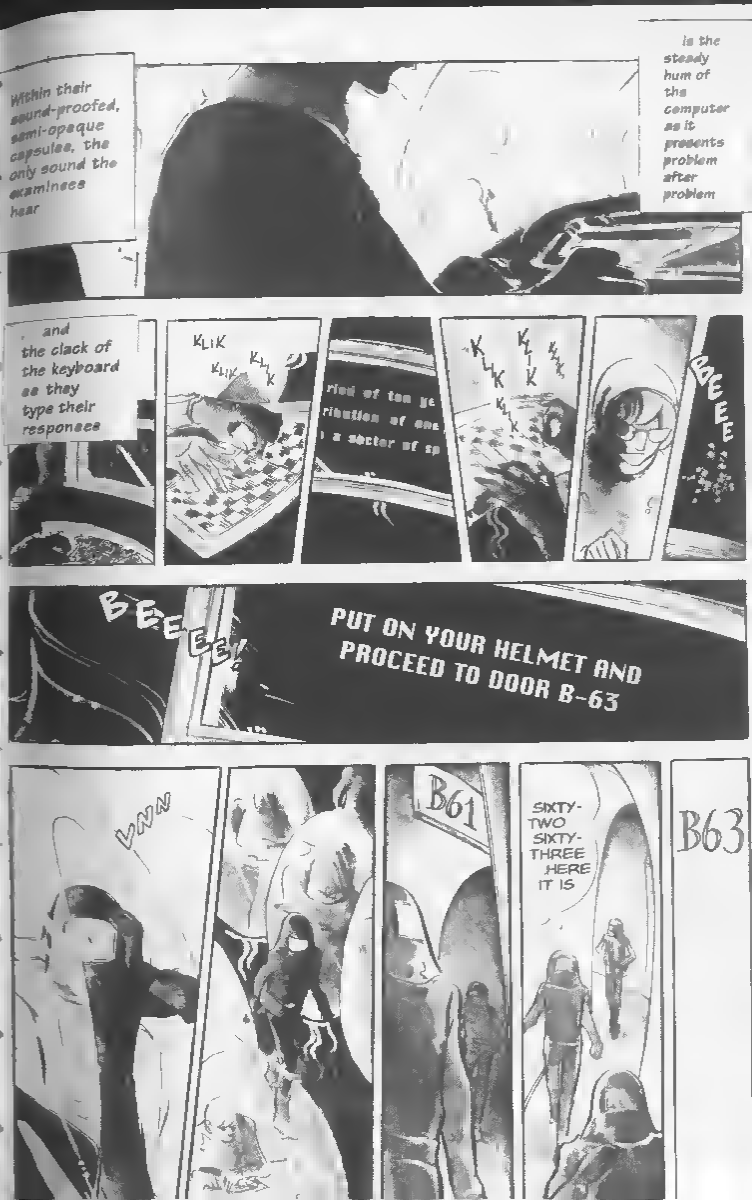
Together, tha discovery of warp propulsion and anti-gravity phenomenally hastened Earth'a development of apace travel Over the course of the following two centuries, Earth established colonies on fifty-one planets, unfortunately skirmishes between colonists desiring independence, and the Earth Federal Government, continually occurred

Thia situation changed dramatically when Earth first encountered an alien civilization, in the form of alien ruins discovered on a planet. Faced with the implications of this discovery, Earth and her colonies overcame their differences and united. The Earth Federal Government and the fifty-one colony planets combined to form the Pan-Terran Government

Eventually, Terra joined the Interstellar Alliance -- comprised of three superpowers Lota, Segul, Seba, and the numerous smaller species -- and Terrans began to expand their territory. Terrens and Sabens shere a strikingly similar psychological makeup, and rivalry developed between the two peoples Through its skirmishes with tha Sebens over the course of the following four centuries, Terra grew into a superpower on a par with Lota, Segul, and Sabe

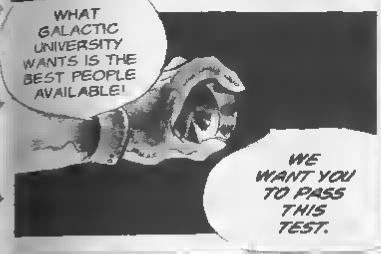
Tarrans are now the most populous people, followed by Seba, Segul, and Lota With the exception of Lotans, marriage occurs between practically all species (Because of their peculiar religion, even the most basic commerce with the Lotans is difficult.)

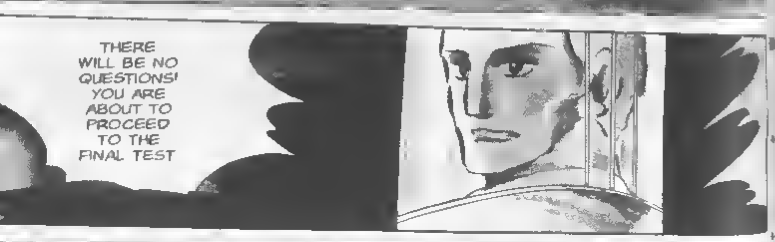
The examination room aboard the spaceship A-22


Within their sound-proofed, semi-opaque capsules, the only sound the examinees hear
is the steady hum of the computer as it presents problem after problem
, and the clack of the keyboard as they type their responses
KLIK
KLIK
KLIK
KLIK
KLIK
KLIK
BEEEE
BEEEEE
PUT ON YOUR HELMET AND PROCEED TO DOOR B-63
LUUN
B61
SIXTY-TWO SIXTY-THREE HERE IT IS
B63

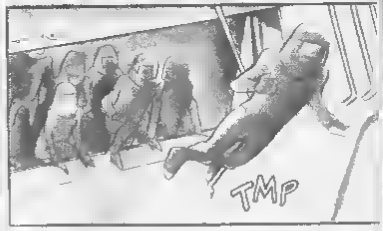
LOOKS LIKE EVERYONE'S HERE I'LL TAKE YOUR EXAMINATION TICKETS

THERE ARE SEVEN HUNDRED EXAMINEES ABOARD THE A-22
EVERY ONE OF YOU HAS PASSED THE FIRST AND SECOND STAGE TESTS YOU'RE THE BEST AND THE BRIGHTEST FROM ALL OVER THE GALAXY
BASED ON YOUR RESPONSES TO THE PROBLEMS WITH WHICH YOU WERE JUST PRESENTED, THE COMPUTER HAS DIVIDED YOU INTO SEVENTY TEAMS OF TEN MEMBERS EACH
YOURS IS THE FIRST TEAM OF MEN THE COMPUTER GENERATED TEAM NUMBER ONE

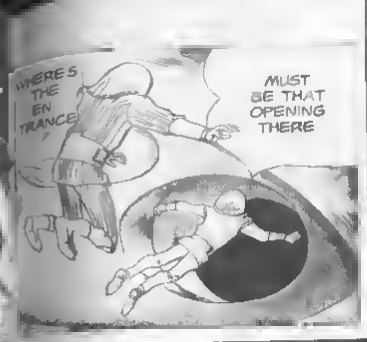

WHAT GALACTIC UNIVERSITY WANTS IS THE BEST PEOPLE AVAILABLE!
WE WANT YOU TO PASS THIS TEST.


THERE WILL BE NO QUESTIONS! YOU ARE ABOUT TO PROCEED TO THE FINAL TEST

THAT SHIP WILL BE THE PROVING GROUND FOR THE TEN OF YOU.
YOU'LL FIND OUT WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU GET THERE NOW GO!


TMP

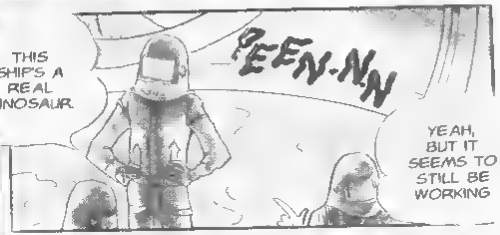
IT'S AN OLD LINE, BUT
GOOD LUCK


WHERE'S THE ENTRANCE?
MUST BE THAT OPENING THERE

I DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING ABOUT THE FINAL TEST BEING HANDS ON
WELL, NOW WE KNOW WHY WE WERE GIVEN SPACESUITS.

WHAT KIND OF TEST CAN THEY GIVE US IN A PLACE LIKE THIS?
ARE ALL TEN OF US HERE? NOBODY MISSING? THEN I'LL CLOSE THE HATCH.

VRDEEE
VNNN


THIS SHIP'S A REAL DINOSAUR.
PEEN-NN
YEAH, BUT IT SEEMS TO STILL BE WORKING

HEY, THE ORANGE SAFETY LIGHT'S ON I GUESS WE CAN TAKE OUR HELMETS OFF NOW
HOLD IT!

THERE'S ONE TOO MANY. THERE ARE ELEVEN OF US!
ELEVEN!?
WHY!?
THERE ARE ELEVEN OF US!
WHO DOESN'T BELONG HERE!?
WHAT KIND OF INTRIGUE IS THIS!? WHO IS IT!?
THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE A TEN-MEMBER TEAM!
WHO!?
WHO?
THE FINAL TEST HAS ALREADY BEGUN! WHAT'S GOING ON!?
IS IT YOU!?
I'M AN EXAMINEE!
YOU!?
SO AM I
SHOOP!
IS IT YOU!?
NO
BUT
WHY DON'T WE ALL TAKE OFF OUR HELMETS?
WE'RE ISOLATED THERE'S NO POINT IN YELLING AT EACH OTHER

The pass ra
for the First
Test is 0%
For the
Second 10%
For the Fina
70%.
SWISH
SHOOP
PHEW
AAH!
YES
AN EXAMINEE?
The test is given once every two years. There are no restrictions on age or other qualifications
COULD IT BE A COMPUTER ERROR?
OH, COME ON!
Three hundred years ago, the Galactic University was established as an independent planet nation by the Terra System.
WHEN DID THE ELEVENTH APPEAR?
DID ANYBODY TAKE A HEAD COUNT AT THE BEGINNING?
Today, the university also draws students from the Segulan and Saban Systems, as well as the peripheral nations.
A-A WOMAN!
BUT I THOUGHT THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A MEN'S TEAM!
HUH?
MAYBE THE EXAM OFFICER MEANT 'MEN' IN THE OLD SENSE OF 'PEOPLE'
WH-
GRP
WHAT DID YOU SAY!?
WHO'RE YOU CALLING A WOMAN!?

BOWM
WAHHH!

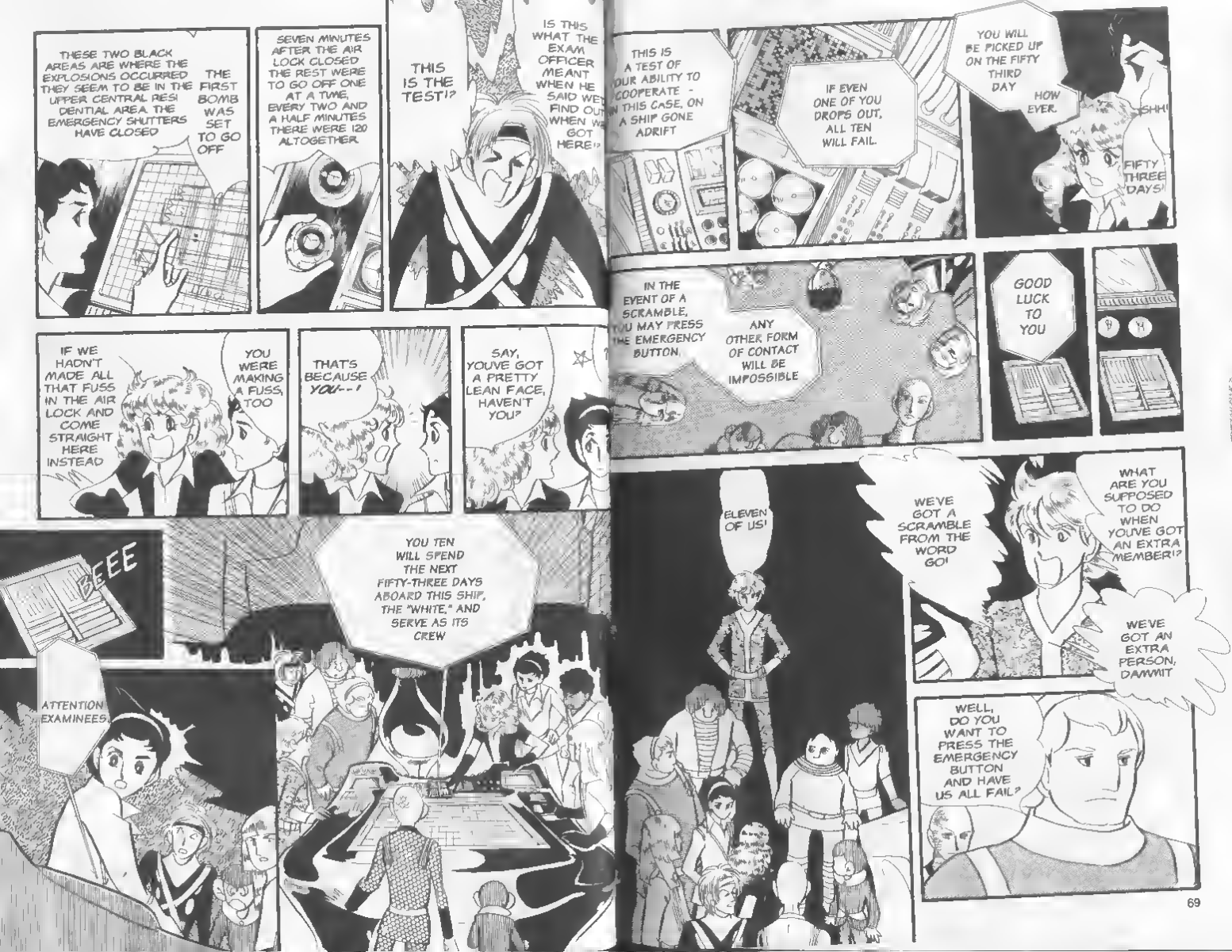
BDMP
DMDMDMD

WHAT THE !?
GET OFF ME, ROCK HEAD!!
THAT WAS AN EXPLOSION!

E-EXPLOSION!? WHY!?
HOW SHOULD I KNOW!?
WAS IT THE ENGINE ROOM?
HEY! WHERE ARE YOU GOING !?
TO THE BRIDGE! WE HAVE TO FIND OUT WHERE THE EXPLOSION OCCURRED.

DM
GRAB ONTO SOMETH !
D-DOOM
WHERE'S THE BRIDGE !?
THIS WAY
SHA!

TURN ON THE MAIN COM-PUTER!
BEEP
FLASH
UH. UM.
I'LL DO IT!
BRING UP A PLAN OF THE SHIP!
KAK KAK KAK
KAK
TMP
FLASH FLASH FLASH
HMM? WHAT'S THAT RED DOT?
22
42
SEEMS TO BE SOME KIND OF EXPLOSIVE
IT'S GONNA
IT'S CIRCUIT D!
CUTTING OFF!
I JUST CUT THE FUSE
BA PA
THE VOLTAGE IS TOO HIGH!
SORRY! MY MISTAKE!
SUSS
WELL?
I THI
IT'S A
RIGH


THESE TWO BLACK AREAS ARE WHERE THE EXPLOSIONS OCCURRED THEY SEEM TO BE IN THE UPPER CENTRAL RESIDENTIAL AREA. THE EMERGENCY SHUTTERS HAVE CLOSED
THE FIRST BOMB WAS SET TO GO OFF
SEVEN MINUTES AFTER THE AIR LOCK CLOSED THE REST WERE TO GO OFF ONE AT A TIME, EVERY TWO AND A HALF MINUTES THERE WERE 120 ALTOGETHER.
THIS IS THE TEST!?
IS THIS WHAT THE EXAM OFFICER MEANT WHEN HE SAID WE'D FIND OUT WHEN WE GOT HERE!?
THIS IS A TEST OF YOUR ABILITY TO COOPERATE - IN THIS CASE, ON A SHIP GONE ADRIFT
IF EVEN ONE OF YOU DROPS OUT, ALL TEN WILL FAIL.
YOU WILL BE PICKED UP ON THE FIFTY THIRD DAY
HOWEVER.
SHH!
FIFTY THREE DAYS!
IF WE HADN'T MADE ALL THAT FUSS IN THE AIR LOCK AND COME STRAIGHT HERE INSTEAD
YOU WERE MAKING A FUSS, TOO
THAT'S BECAUSE YOU--!
SAY, YOUVE GOT A PRETTY LEAN FACE, HAVEN'T YOU?
IN THE EVENT OF A SCRAMBLE, YOU MAY PRESS THE EMERGENCY BUTTON.
ANY OTHER FORM OF CONTACT WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE
GOOD LUCK TO YOU
BEEE
YOU TEN WILL SPEND THE NEXT FIFTY-THREE DAYS ABOARD THIS SHIP, THE "WHITE," AND SERVE AS ITS CREW
ATTENTION EXAMINEES.
ELEVEN OF US!
WE'VE GOT A SCRAMBLE FROM THE WORD GO!
WHAT ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO DO WHEN YOUVE GOT AN EXTRA MEMBER!?
WE'VE GOT AN EXTRA PERSON, DAMMIT
WELL, DO YOU WANT TO PRESS THE EMERGENCY BUTTON AND HAVE US ALL FAIL?

IT SEEMS TO ME WE HAVE MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO
THAN WORRY ABOUT WHO THE ELEVENTH PERSON IS
WE CAN'T AFFORD TO FIGHT AMONGST OUR SELVES
NOT IF WE WANT TO PASS
NOT IF WE WANT TO SURVIVE FOR FIFTY THREE DAYS
THAT'S RIGHT YOUR SHOULDERS ARE BROADER THAN MINE, AREN'T THEY?
?
YOU'RE A TELE ATH!?
NO I HAVE INTUITIVE POWERS EVERYONE FROM MY PLANET DOES
YOU CAN TELL IF SOMEONE'S LYING?
THAT'S RIGHT
I'M A SABAN BASESKA, THE MAYA KING, FROM THE PLANET ALITOSKA LE
EXAM CODE 3-233
YOU'RE RIGHT
OUTER SPACE IS A DANGEROUS PLACE
THIS SHIP IS ISOLATED
I ASSUME THE ELEVENTH PERSON DOESN'T WANT TO DIE EITHER
LET'S INTRO-DUCE OUR SELVES WE'LL START WITH
...
INTRO DUCE OUR SELVES?
OUR NAMES AND EXAMINATION CODE NUMBERS
WELL, ALL RIGHT! LET'S ALL SHAKE HANDS!
WE'LL FIND THE ELEVENTH PERSON IN NO TIME!
FINE
EXAM CODES!? THERE ARE SEVEN HUNDRED EXAM CODES!
ANYBODY CAN MAKE ONE UP!
ALITO SKA?
WE'RE NEXT-DOOR NEIGHBORS!
IS THAT SO? AND YOU ARE?
YOU ARE THE MAYA KING
YOU SUCCEEDED TO THE THRONE OF THE KOMOF DOMAIN JUST TWO WEEKS AGO
DO YOU PLAN TO ATTEND THE UNIVERSITY?
I'LL TOUCH EVERY ONE'S HAND
YOUR HANDS ARE BIGGER THAN MINE!
WOULD YOU CUT IT OUT ALREADY?
SABAN DOLIKAS SOLDUM IV, FROM ALITOSKA GA!
NO JUST TESTING MY ABILITY
PASS OR FAIL, I HAVE TO RETURN TO RULE MY COUNTRY

WELL, WELL. A KING AND A 'FOURTH'! I'M A PROLETARIAT, MYSELF
TERRAN. FROM SHUSHU NAME'S AMAZON KARNISE! NUMBER 3 104
DON'T GET SO DEFENSIVE JUST BECAUSE SABA HAS A LONGER HISTORY THAN TERRA
WHAT!?
EASY NOW FELLA!
I'M TERRAN, TOO FROM KWESS
NAME'S CHAKO KAKA.
I'M TERRAN, TOO FROM PELOMA.
DORF TUSTA
WHO GIVES A DAMN ABOUT SABA OR TERRA? I'M FROM THE PLANET VENE
WE'RE NOT PART OF ANY PLANETARY SYSTEM!
YOUR NAME?
FROL
THAT'S SHORT FOR FROL BERI CHERI, IF IT MAKES ANY DIFFERENCE TO YOU
WHAT A MOUTH. DOESN'T QUITE MATCH THE REST OF HIS FACE
SEEMS HE NEVER LEARNED TO SPEAK PROPER 'INTER STELLAR'
MUST BE FROM THE BOON DOCKS.
SINCE WHEN DO THEY GRADE THIS TEST BASED ON SPEECH!?
THAT'S SOME RED NOSE YOU'VE GOT. THE TERRAN SYSTEMS GOT PLENTY OF UNIQUE FACES
I BET YOU'RE TERRAN TOO
ME?
YOU MUST BE SABAN! I CAN TELL BY YOUR FACE A NOBLE FROM SAZEH OR THERE ABOUTS?
SABA HAS MORE THAN ITS SHARE OF BEAUTIES
YOU GUYS HAVE BEEN YAPPING ABOUT 'TERRA THIS' AND 'SABA THAT.' SO WHAT!?
IS IT SO SURPRISING THAT PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT PLANETS HAVE DIFFERENT FACES!?
WHAP
NOW, I DON'T KNOW ANY OF YOU BUMS, BUT I'LL TELL YOU THIS
I HAVE NO INTENTION OF FAILING THIS EXAM BECAUSE OF INFIGHTING!
I'M SABAN FROM MIS
MY NAME'S TOTO
TOTO NI
HEH, HEH!
LOOKS LIKE SABA'S GOT ITS SHARE OF UNIQUE FACES, TOO!

HEY, HAVE YOU FOUND THE ELEVENTH PERSON?
NO THEYRE ALL EXAMINEES
HOW BOUT THE REST? GET ON WITH IT!
MY PLANET, TOO, IS UNAFFILIATED WITH ANY PLANETARY SYSTEM.
I'M THE FIRST EXAMINEE FROM THE PERIPHERAL PLANET INUDO MY NAME IS VIDMENEER NUUM.
SORRY ABOUT THAT I JUST WANTED TO TEST YOUR INTUITION
YOU WERE TESTING ME?
I'M GREN GROFF
SEGULAN FROM THE PLANET GRAY-WHITE
SEGUL!
A SEGULAN!
LOOKS LIKE SOME KIND OF ROCKMAN TO ME!
I'M SABAN
GUNIGUS GAGTOSS FROM REDRAYGA NUMBER 3 579
Just one more.
WATCH YOUR MOUTH. EVEN SABAS HISTORY AND TRADITION CAN'T BE COMPARED TO SEGULS!
OH, YEAH?
I WASN'T CONVINCED YOU REALLY HAD INTUITIVE POWERS
BUT YOU DO NO DOUBT ABOUT IT
There is no eleventh
AND YOU?
SABAN
EINZ ZWEI, FROM SAZE
THAT'S NOT TRUE!
WELL!? WHO DOES YOUR INTUITIVE POWER TELL YOU IS THE ELEVENTH!?
NO ONE
WHAT . . .?
ROCK HEAD!! YOU'RE THE ELEVENTH!?

COME OFF IT! THE FACT IS, THERE'S ONE TOO MANY!
BUT
THEY'RE ALL EXAMINEES NO ONE IS LYING
THAT'S RIDICULOUS!
THAT'S SOME INTUITION YOUVE GOT!
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
TADATHOS LANE
TERRAN FROM SHIBBELITH

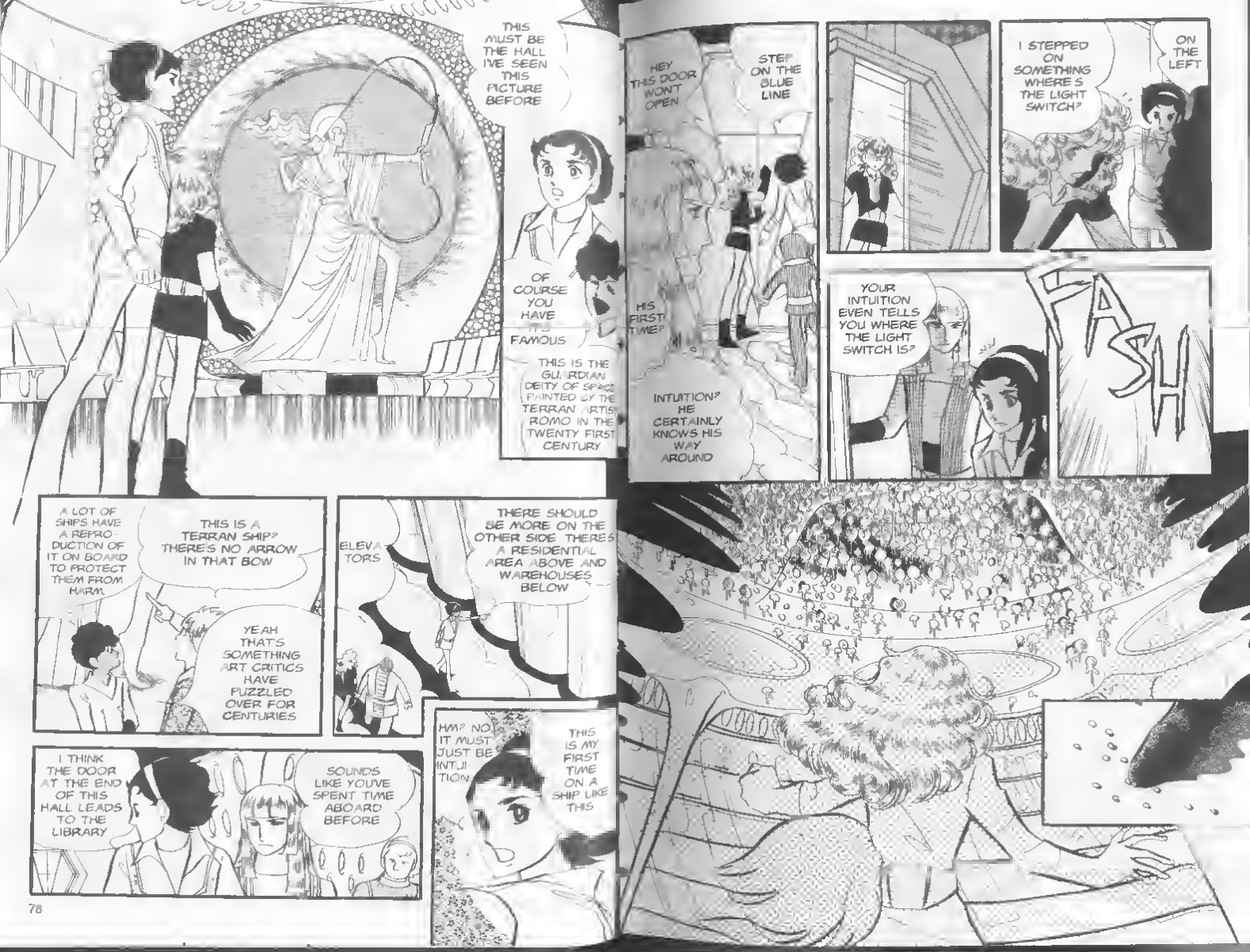
WHO CAN VOUCH FOR YOU?
HMPH! GETTING OUR HOPES UP LIKE THAT!
NOW WE'RE BACK TO SQUARE ONE!
SIGH!
DID YOU JUST GET LUCKY WITH ROCK-HEAD!?
OR ARE YOU THE ELEVENTH?
The Elder always said intuition is never wrong if it's wrong, it's not intuition
So what does it mean? How can there not be an eleventh?

FAP
HEY, DON'T LET IT GET YOU DOWN
YOUVE GOT PLENTY OF TIME TO WIN BACK EVERYONE'S TRUST. THE TEST HAS JUST BEGUN

ANYWAY LET'S START BY CHECKING OUT THE SHIP
NO ONE IS TO ACT ALONE WE'LL MOVE IN TEAMS OF TWO OR MORE
ALL DECISIONS WILL BE SETTLED BY A MAJORITY VOTE
IF YOU SEE ANYONE BEHAVING SUSPICIOUSLY REPORT IT IMMEDIATELY
THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT THE ELEVENTH PERSON IS AFTER
HMPH! WHO DOES THAT KING THINK HE IS? CAPTAIN OF THE SHIP?
PROB ABLY A NATURAL LEADER

WOW THERE ARE ABOUT FIVE HUNDRED CREW'S QUARTERS IN THE AREA OF THE BRIDGE ALONE
THIS IS A HELL OF A BIG SHIP

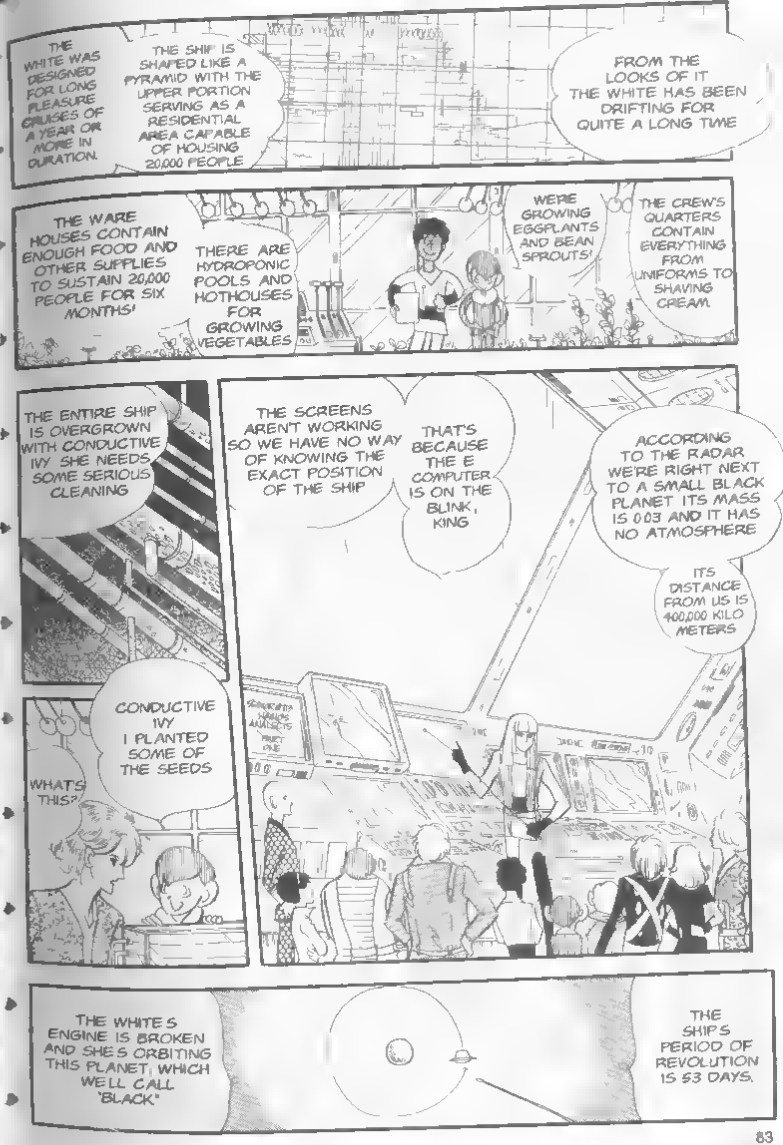
TADA, ARE YOU AVERAGE SIZE FOR A TERRAN? HOW TALL ARE YOU?
I'M FIVE FIVE WHY?
WE'RE ABOUT THE SAME HEIGHT. SO HOW COME YOUR SHOULDERS AND ARMS ARE BIGGER THAN MINE?
HM. PROBABLY JUST A PLANETARY DIFFER ENCE
?
HMPH


THIS MUST BE THE HALL I'VE SEEN THIS PICTURE BEFORE
OF COURSE YOU HAVE IT'S FAMOUS
THIS IS THE GUARDIAN DEITY OF SPACE PAINTED BY THE TERRAN ARTIST ROMO IN THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY
HEY THIS DOOR WON'T OPEN
STEP ON THE BLUE LINE
HIS FIRST TIME?
INTUITION? HE CERTAINLY KNOWS HIS WAY AROUND
I STEPPED ON SOMETHING WHERE'S THE LIGHT SWITCH?
ON THE LEFT
YOUR INTUITION EVEN TELLS YOU WHERE THE LIGHT SWITCH IS?
FASH
A LOT OF SHIPS HAVE A REPRODUCTION OF IT ON BOARD TO PROTECT THEM FROM HARM.
THIS IS A TERRAN SHIP? THERE'S NO ARROW IN THAT BOW
YEAH THAT'S SOMETHING ART CRITICS HAVE PUZZLED OVER FOR CENTURIES
ELEVATORS
THERE SHOULD BE MORE ON THE OTHER SIDE THERE'S A RESIDENTIAL AREA ABOVE AND WAREHOUSES BELOW
I THINK THE DOOR AT THE END OF THIS HALL LEADS TO THE LIBRARY
SOUNDS LIKE YOU'VE SPENT TIME ABOARD BEFORE
HM? NO IT MUST JUST BE INTUITION
THIS IS MY FIRST TIME ON A SHIP LIKE THIS

KYAAAAH!!
I feel sick
TMP! TMP!
CLK
WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THIS TADA?
CONDUCTIVE IVY
IT'S GONE WILD
CONDUCTIVE IVY? YOU MEAN LIKE THEY USE FOR ELECTRICAL WIRING? ARE THESE SEEDS?
THAT'S RIGHT TOTO.
FROL, THIS IS A KIND OF METALLIC PLANT IT WON'T EAT YOU
MEH MEH METALLIC
HMM

WHO WHO- WHO SAID ANYTHING ABOUT BEING EATEN?
I I WAS JUST TAKEN OFF GUARD, THAT'S ALL!
?
FROL YOU ARE A WOMAN AREN'T YOU?
WHAPP
THAT DOES IT! MORE INTUITION, HUH!?
HERE! SEE FOR YOURSELF IF I'M A WOMAN!
FROL!
FAPP
FROL!
AH!
SNAP
ME NEER

ME NEER!
WH WHAT!?
YOU! CALL ME A WOMAN AGAIN, AND I'LL--
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT! I'M SORRY
I HATE WOMEN!
WOMEN ARE NOTHING BUT A WASTE OF SPACE
FROL'S TOO SIMPLE TO BE THE ELEVENTH. DISCOUNTING ME-- AND YOU, SINCE YOU KNOW ME
TOTO, THE LITTLE GUY WHO LOOKS LIKE A MONKEY, SEEMS TOO TIMID
AS FOR THE REST
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF TADA, FOURTH?
THE GUY WITH THE BLACK HAIR AND THE WHITE OUTFIT?
What's happening to my intuition?
There's something strange about the "White."


THE WHITE WAS DESIGNED FOR LONG PLEASURE CRUISES OF A YEAR OR MORE IN DURATION.
THE SHIP IS SHAPED LIKE A PYRAMID WITH THE UPPER PORTION SERVING AS A RESIDENTIAL AREA CAPABLE OF HOUSING 20,000 PEOPLE
FROM THE LOOKS OF IT THE WHITE HAS BEEN DRIFTING FOR QUITE A LONG TIME
THE WARE HOUSES CONTAIN ENOUGH FOOD AND OTHER SUPPLIES TO SUSTAIN 20,000 PEOPLE FOR SIX MONTHS!
THERE ARE HYDROPONIC POOLS AND HOTHOUSES FOR GROWING VEGETABLES
WE'RE GROWING EGGPLANTS AND BEAN SPROUTS!
THE CREW'S QUARTERS CONTAIN EVERYTHING FROM UNIFORMS TO SHAVING CREAM.
THE ENTIRE SHIP IS OVERGROWN WITH CONDUCTIVE IVY SHE NEEDS SOME SERIOUS CLEANING
THE SCREENS AREN'T WORKING SO WE HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING THE EXACT POSITION OF THE SHIP
THAT'S BECAUSE THE E COMPUTER IS ON THE BLINK, KING
ACCORDING TO THE RADAR WE'RE RIGHT NEXT TO A SMALL BLACK PLANET. ITS MASS IS 0.03 AND IT HAS NO ATMOSPHERE
ITS DISTANCE FROM US IS 400,000 KILO METERS
CONDUCTIVE IVY I PLANTED SOME OF THE SEEDS
WHAT'S THIS?
THE WHITE'S ENGINE IS BROKEN AND SHE'S ORBITING THIS PLANET, WHICH WE'LL CALL "BLACK"
THE SHIP'S PERIOD OF REVOLUTION IS 53 DAYS.

Fifty-three days

SO THAT'S WHY THE TEST IS 53 DAYS LONG!
SO THE WHITE JUST HAS TO ORBIT ONCE AND WE'RE IN THE CLEAR!
IT'S ALREADY THE FOURTH DAY JUST 49 MORE LEFT!
I WONDER IF IT'S AS SIMPLE AS THAT
!?
SWISH
HMM MY WAIST IS THINNER THAN YOURS.
WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU!?
ARE THE PEOPLE ON MY PLANET REALLY SMALLER?
THAT'S RIGHT BY TERRAN STANDARDS, YOU'RE BUILT LIKE A FLAT CHESTED WOMAN!!
WHMP
WAH!
KLATTER
KLATTER
KLATTER
KING! WE FOUND A HOARD OF GUNS IN WAREHOUSE 2B!
GUNS!?
THEY SAID THE BOXES JUST CAME FALLING DOWN THERE ARE TEN BOXES IN ALL
THIS IS GREAT! WITH THESE WE CAN CLEAR AWAY THE IVY IN ONE SWEEP!
WOW!
THEY'RE ALL SHOCK GUNS AREN'T THERE ANY LASER GUNS?
YOU FOUND THEM, TADA?
YES
WHAT USE ARE GUNS TO US?
WHAT USE? PLENTY! WE CAN DEFEND OURSELVES!
WE HAVE NO IDEA WHO THE ELEVENTH MAN IS
WE'RE IN A DANGEROUS SITUATION HERE!
THESE WILL JUST MAKE IT MORE DANGEROUS WHAT DO YOU THINK, NUUM?
I AGREE
WE'RE ALREADY OVERCOME BY SUSPICION
IT'S BOUND TO END IN BLOOD-SHED
WE AGREED ON MAJORITY RULE. SHALL WE TAKE A VOTE?

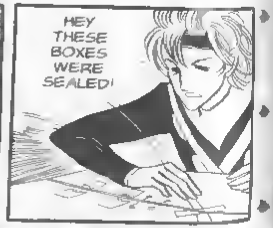
THOSE IN FAVOR OF CARRYING GUNS?
IN FAVOR!

WE'RE OPPOSED

SO THE ONE WHO FOUND THE GUNS IS OPPOSED?
I SEE YOU DON'T LIKE WEAPONS GOOD ENOUGH LET'S PUT THEM AWAY

HMPH! CHICKEN WHAT'S THE IDEA OF OPPOSING!?
BEING CAUTIOUS IS NOT THE SAME AS BEING CHICKEN
DO YOU KNOW HOW TO USE A GUN?

WHADDYA MEAN!? I'M A HELL OF A GOOD SHOT! I'M A MAN, DAMMIT!

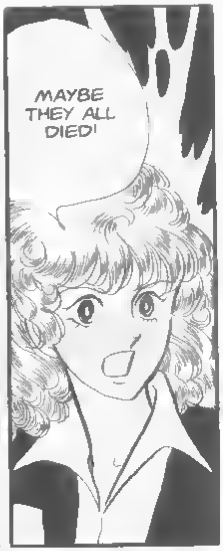

HEY THESE BOXES WERE SEALED!

IT LOOKS LIKE SOMETHING HAPPENED ON THIS SHIP ALL THOSE YEARS AGO
HOW DO YOU KNOW? THEY MIGHT HAVE JUST PUT AWAY THE GUNS BECAUSE IT WAS SO PEACEFUL.

IF IT WAS SO PEACEFUL, WHY DID IT BECOME A GHOST SHIP?
PROBABLY BECAUSE THE ENGINE BROKE DOWN.

THAT'S TRUE. IT IS BROKEN
BUT WHAT BECAME OF THE PASSENGERS?

THEY WERE ALL SAVED BY ANOTHER SHIP
THAT'S WHY THERE'S SO MUCH FOOD LEFT


MAYBE THEY ALL DIED!

FROM
THAT'S IT!
THE ELEVENTH MAN.

IS A GHOST!
KRAK

TADA!

FWAP

WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN THE RECORDS ROOM?
KING
WE AGREED TO MOVE IN TEAMS OF TWO OR MO
IT'S ALL RIGHT I'M WITH HIM.
FROL
SO THIS IS WHERE YOU ARE THAT WAS SOME CRACK ON THE JAW YOU GAVE ME
NO BIG DEAL GUESS I SAID SOMETHING THAT UPSET YOU
WHATCHA DOING?
YOU DID SAY SOMETHING THAT UPSET ME

I JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS
BUT WE WERE TALKING ABOUT THE CREW, RIGHT?
SO I FIGURED I'D START BY EXAMINING THE LISTS OF CREW MEMBERS

IF YOU'RE GOING TO DO SOMETHING LIKE THIS, YOU SHOULD TELL THE REST OF US
HE JUST DID, DIDN'T HE?
I'LL HELP YOU IS THIS THAT INTUITION OF YOURS AGAIN?
YEAH.
CREEPY SO, HAVE YOU FOUND ANYTHING?
NOTHING IT LOOKS LIKE THEY TOOK THE RECORDS WITH THEM WHEN THEY LEFT THE SHIP

YEE-OUCH
PINCH
WHAT'RE YOU DOING!?
NOTHING
I WAS JUST THINKING THAT YOUR SKIN LOOKS HARDER THAN MINE

HARD OR NOT, IT HURTS WHEN YOU PINCH IT!
ARE YOU GOING TO BE A MAN YOUR WHOLE LIFE?
I WAS BORN A MAN!
DON'T YOU EVER GET TIRED OF IT?
BD-DUMP

HE WAS DIGGING AROUND THE RECORDS ROOM.

HE'S BEEN TRYING TO WIN THE FAVOR OF THE TEAM MEMBERS FROM THE START
AND HE'S THE ONE WHO FOUND THOSE GUNS HE STANDS OUT TOO MUCH. ON TOP OF THAT, HE KNOWS HIS WAY AROUND THE WHOLE SHIP, AND NOW HE'S SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING!
HE MAY HAVE SOME KIND OF PLAN

I'm sure he's going to pull something
KEEP AN EYE ON HIM.

OUR FIRST ATTEMPT AT FORCED CULTIVATION-SPROUTS, EGGPLANTS, TURNIPS, LETTUCE, BROCCOLI
VITAMINS A, B, C, AND D
SALAD
BOILED VEGGIES
STIR FRY!
SAUTE!

DOES ANYONE KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT ENGINEERING?
GUNGA
I WANT TO FIX THE COMPUTER. SOMEONE HELP ME OUT

FIX THE COMPUTER!?
PLANTS ARE MY SPECIALTY.

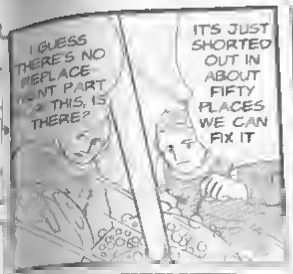
WE JUST HAVE TO FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS IN THIS REPAIR MANUAL. WHERE I COME FROM, TECHNICAL EDUCATION IS TAKEN VERY SERIOUSLY
ARE YOU SURE WE CAN DO IT?

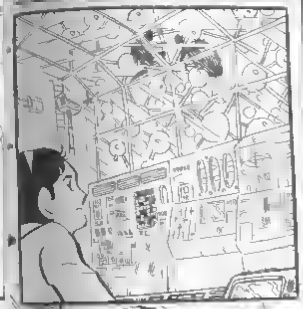
ACCORDING TO THE CIRCUIT PANEL, THE SHORT SHOULD BE SOMEWHERE AROUND HERE

LET ME HELP
THANKS, ROCK HEAD

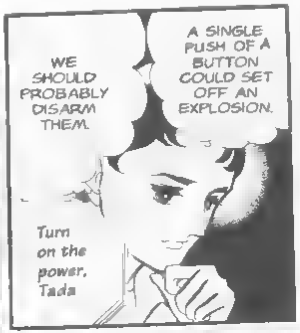
SHUT OFF THE D AND E SWITCHES FOR ME, TADA.
OKAY, GUNGA
CHK

POCKY


I GUESS THERE'S NO REPLACE MENT PART FOR THIS, IS THERE?
IT'S JUST SHORTED OUT IN ABOUT FIFTY PLACES WE CAN FIX IT



A MAP OF THE SHIP
THERE ARE STILL 120 BOMBS IN PLACE


WE SHOULD PROBABLY DISARM THEM.
A SINGLE PUSH OF A BUTTON COULD SET OFF AN EXPLOSION.
Turn on the power, Tada

Tada, turn on switch E.
HM? OKAY!

BOOM

GUNGA!!
KLK
WHUMP
WHAT HAPPENED!?
GUNGA!?
GUNGA!
ROCK-HEAD!!
I'M FINE!!

AMAZON, GET A STRETCHER!!
DOES ANYONE HAVE ANY MEDICAL TRAINING OR EXPERIENCE WITH DISSECTION?!
Tada, turn on the power!
Tada, switch E
Switch E!
SLAP!
SLAP
DON'T JUST STAND THERE WITH YOUR MOUTH HANGING OPEN! THIS WAS YOUR MISTAKE!
OR WAS IT A MISTAKE?
TADA!
THE STRETCHER IS IN THE CORRIDOR CEILING PULL THAT CORD!
PROL! TURN ON ALL THE SWITCHES IN THE SICKBAY!

LAY GUNGA DOWN HERE!
ROGER!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING!? DO YOU INTEND TO KILL HIM!? YOU'RE THE ONE WHO
ANYBODY CAN MAKE A MISTAKE!
IF EVEN ONE OF US DIES WE'LL ALL FAIL!
LET HIM DO WHAT HE WILL. IF HE KILLS GUNGA, THAT'LL BE PROOF ENOUGH THAT HE'S THE ELEVENTH MAN
SHHHHH
SSS
PLOP
HIS BLOOD IS GREEN!
IF YOU FEEL SICK, STEP AWAY
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME
GREEN TENDONS
GREEN LYMPH
ITS DEEP
THESE TENDONS ARE INCREDIBLE!
THEY'RE HIGHLY DEVELOPED!
CHUK
WE DON'T KNOW HIS BLOOD TYPE
WE'LL MAKE DO
SUTURE
FSHHH
PHEW
THANK GOODNESS.
TADA SAYS HE'LL WAKE UP IN THE MORNING!
AT THE MOMENT OF THE SHORT, TWO FRAGMENTS OF WIRE PIERCED HIS BODY
JUST BELOW THE NUMBER TWO STERNUM
HE TOOK A 300 VOLT SHOCK, BUT HIS EKG READS NORMAL
HAVE YOU EVER - UH CUT INTO ANYONE BEFORE TADA?
OUR VILLAGE ELDER IS A DOCTOR, AND I WAS HIS ASSISTANT I THINK I CAN DO IT
I HOPE SO I'VE ONLY SEEN IT DONE ON TV IN CLASS.
THIS HASN'T CLEARED TADA OF SUSPICION
WHERE IS HE?

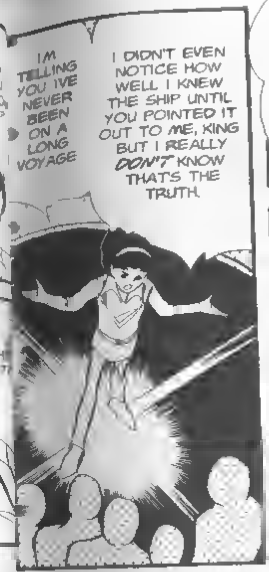
SHHHHHHH
THE 24TH FLOOR
THE TOP FLOOR OF THE RESIDENTIAL AREA
SHEEE
Hmph.
What the hell am I doing here?
I've been told that an Elder's intuition is almost as strong as a telepath's.
Hmm. It's possible.
If there's a telepath here... If that telepath is the eleventh man...
that would explain my intuition going haywire, and that voice I heard
WHO COULD IT BE?
Frol Nuum
King
Fourth Toto
Redhose Chako
HMPH!
AH!
I heard a voice right by my ear telling me to turn that switch on.
And I turned it on without double checking!
A TELEPATH!
Thank goodness he pulled through He's a tough one
My intuition is haywire .I'm making mistakes It's just me who's like this What if everyone falls because of me?
And after the Elder went to so much trouble to get me into the university
FROL ?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE ALONE?
IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE TO ME, BUT KING IS REALLY SUSPICIOUS OF YOU.
HE SAYS YOU PUSHED THAT SWITCH ON PURPOSE
LET'S GET BACK DOWN STAIRS
KING ?

KING!!

WHAT BUSINESS DO YOU HAVE ON THE TOP FLOOR OF THE RESIDENTIAL AREA?

THAT'S A DIRTY TRICK!
DID YOU FOLLO ME?

IF YOU'RE THE ELEVENTH, WHAT IS IT YOU'RE UP TO?
I--I'M NOT TH ELEVENT


I'M TELLING YOU I'VE NEVER BEEN ON A LONG VOYAGE
I DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE HOW WELL I KNEW THE SHIP UNTIL YOU POINTED IT OUT TO ME, KING BUT I REALLY DON'T KNOW THAT'S THE TRUTH.

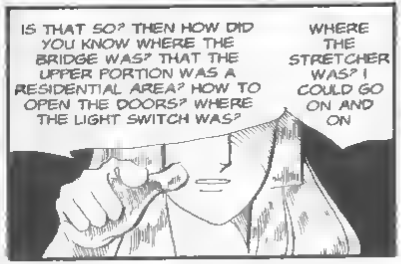
YOUR ACTIONS ARE JUST TOO SUSPICIOUS.
IF YOU CAN'T EXPLAIN THEM, THEN IT'S ONLY NATURAL WE HAVE DOUBTS ABOUT YOU.

"SUSPICIOUS"!? YOU'RE JUST PICKING AND CHOOSING WHAT-EVER FITS YOUR TRUMPED UP STORY!
WHAT DO YOU EXPECT?

THERE'S ONE TOO MANY IN THIS GROUP
THERE'S NO TELLING WHEN THE ELEVENTH ...
MIGHT PULL SOMETHING AND BLOW THE TEST FOR ALL OF US.

YOU'VE BEEN ON THIS SHIP BEFORE, HAVEN'T YOU?

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER BEEN ON ANY SHIP LIKE THIS!


IS THAT SO? THEN HOW DID YOU KNOW WHERE THE BRIDGE WAS? THAT THE UPPER PORTION WAS A RESIDENTIAL AREA? HOW TO OPEN THE DOORS? WHERE THE LIGHT SWITCH WAS?
WHERE THE STRETCHER WAS? I COULD GO ON AND ON

WHY DO YOU KNOW SO MUCH ABOUT THIS SHIP?
TADA!

WHY?

YOU DON'T WANT TO FAIL, DO YOU?

I UNDER-STAND YOUR SUSPICION, BUT I'M NOT THE ELEVENTH.
THE ELE VENTH IS A TELE PATH.

IS THAT SO? HOW DO YOU KNOW?
YOUR INTUITION TELLS YOU SO?

I KNOW BECAUSE MY INTUITION HAS GONE HAYWIRE

TADA! YOUR CLOTHES ARE WHITE YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE IN THE GROUP WEARING WHITE. BUT I DON'T REMEMBER SEEING ANYONE IN WHITE WHEN WE GATHERED IN ROOM B-63

WHAT!? I WAS THERE I'M TELLING THE TRUTH!
I WAS RIGHT THERE IN B-63!
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF ROCK HEAD'S ASSERTION?
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT WAS THERE SOME ONE IN WHITE IN THAT ROOM?
I DIDN'T NOTICE
HMM
NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT TOUGHNESS IS MY ONE STRONG POINT
AS SOON AS I'M BETTER I'LL FINISH FIXING THE COMPUTER.
THANK YOU, GUNGA.
YOU'RE NOT SUSPICIOUS OF ME?
NO
THE LIGHTS WERE DIM IN THAT ROOM!
LET'S TAKE A VOTE
KING!
IF A MAJORITY ARE SUSPICIOUS WE'LL KEEP HIM LOCKED IN ONE OF THE ROOMS U TIL THE SUSPICIO IS CLEARED
WELL, IT'S A GOOD THING YOU'RE TOUGH. YOU JUST BARELY SAVED TADA FROM BEING TOSSED INTO JAIL
I CAN'T BELIEVE THE ELEVENTH WOULD BE SO STUPID!
YOU SAID IT
THIS GUY'S DONE NOTHING BUT SCREW UP FROM DAY ONE
GUNGA!!
Five!
THAT SETTLES IT GUNGA IS ABSTAINING, SO BY A FIVE TO FOUR VOTE WE'LL LOCK UP TADA.
I'M OPPOSED THAT MAKES IT A FIVE AGAINST FIVE DRAW
BESIDES, THEY TELL ME YOU'RE THE ONE WHO OPERATED ON ME, TADA.
I WAS SCARED STIFF
I DIDN'T KNOW YOUR BLOOD TYPE
THE INSIDE OF MY BODY WAS COMPLETELY GREEN, WASN'T IT?
MY PLANET IS IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE FAR FROM THE CENTER OF SABA
MY PEOPLE HAVE AN EXTREMELY SHORT LIFESPAN
THERE'S NO ESCAPE FROM THE DISEASE THAT PERVADES OUR ENTIRE PLANET, SO MOST OF US DIE AROUND THE AGE OF THIRTY

I WAS SUB JECTED TO THE CULTI VATION AT AGE NINE
IT'S STILL IN THE EXPERI MENTAL STAGE BUT I'M KIND OF A CYBORG MADE POSSIBLE BY A PROCESS OF CULTIVATING REDRAYGAN GREEN CHLORELLA
IF I MANAGE TO LIVE LONG, AND SHOW NO SIGNS OF CHROMO SOME ABERRA- TION
IF I SUCCEED
THEN OTHER REDRAYGANS CAN UNDERGO CULTIVATION
OF COURSE, AT FIRST
IT WILL JUST BE A HAND FUL.
BE CAUSED OF THE EXPENS INVOLVED
KLANG
WHAT HAP PENED?
I... MY HAND JUST SLIPPED
It's not him He couldn't be the eleventh
But what is this terrifying danger signal? "It will just be a handful"
THAT'S WHY I WANT
TO GET INTO THE GALACTIC UNIVERSITY, GRADUATE..
..AND THINK OF A WAY TO MAKE MONEY
SO THAT WE CAN ALL LIVE LONGER
GET MORE WORK DONE
..AND FIND HAPPI- NESS

They come from different planets all acrose the galaxy, bringing with them different dreams.
Why is the eleventh one here?
Eleven. ..all about the same age as me.
What kind of dream, what kind of future does the eleventh one strive for?
And who is he? Who is the eleventh?
THIS IS GETTING SERIOUS IVE GOT TO FIND HIM SOON BEFORE THE SUSPICION TOWARDS ME GROWS ANY STRONGER.
All I know is that he must be a telepath
Who seems like he might be a telepath. ..?
YO! TADA! OVER HERE
28
GOOD TIMING
HAVE A DRINK
WHERE DID YOU FIND THAT!?
THERE'RE GALLONS OF IT! DON'T WORRY, SO MUCH!
FAFP
IS THIS MEANT TO CHEER ME UP?

YOU KNOW WHAT? I'M SICK OF THIS TEST
HOW MUCH LONGER DO WE HAVE TO SIT IN THIS BOAT?
GLUG GLUG GLUG
WELL, IT'S STILL THE NINTH DAY
FORTY FOUR MORE DAYS TO GO

IT'S SPRING ON MY PLANET RIGHT NOW HOW 'BOUT YOURS?
IT'S SUMMER YEAR ROUND ON SHIBBELITH

THE ELDER WHO RAISED ME TOLD ME TO COME HERE AND GET A GOOD EDUCATION.
AND YOUR PARENTS?

I HAVEN'T GOT ANY

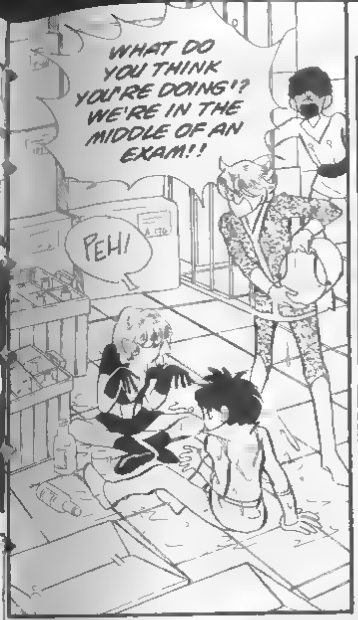
"Parents"
The utter meaninglessness and absence of memory this word carries for me

The Elder
The Elder has never told me anything

PARENTS, HUH? MY PARENTS
WANT TO MARRY ME OFF TO THE NEIGHBORING LORD

THE LORD HAS EIGHT WIVES ALREADY! I'M THE YOUNGEST CHILD, YOU KNOW THAT'S WHAT IT IS
HUH?
BEING THE YOUNGEST STINKS.

SPLASH


WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING!? WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF AN EXAM!!
PEH!

NNN
BUMP

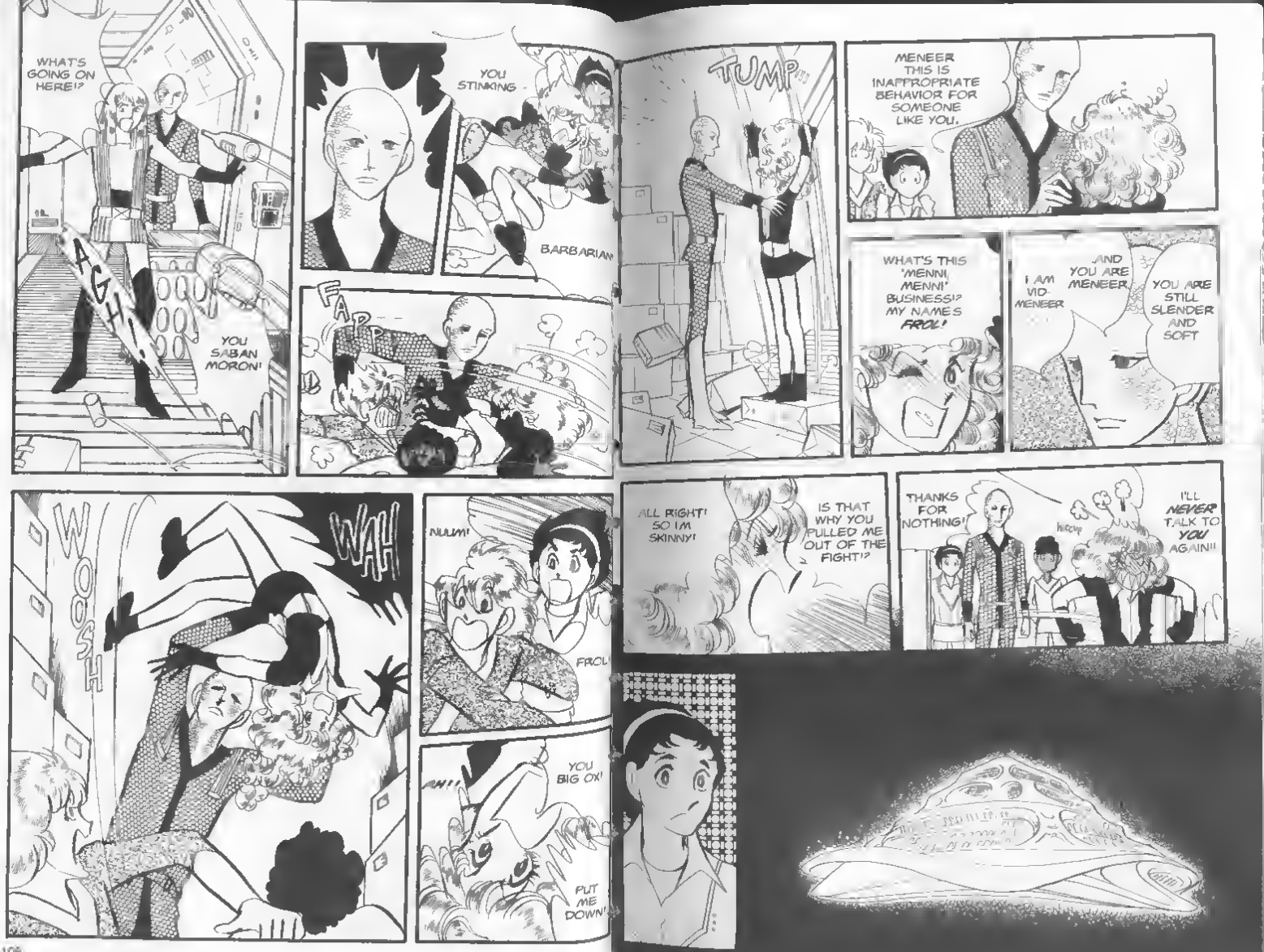
HEY
WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA FOURTH?
FROL, YOU--

WHAT!?
KRAK

YOU LITTLE DRUNK!
KRASH
BIDMP
TUMP

HEY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HITTING A DRUNK MAN!?

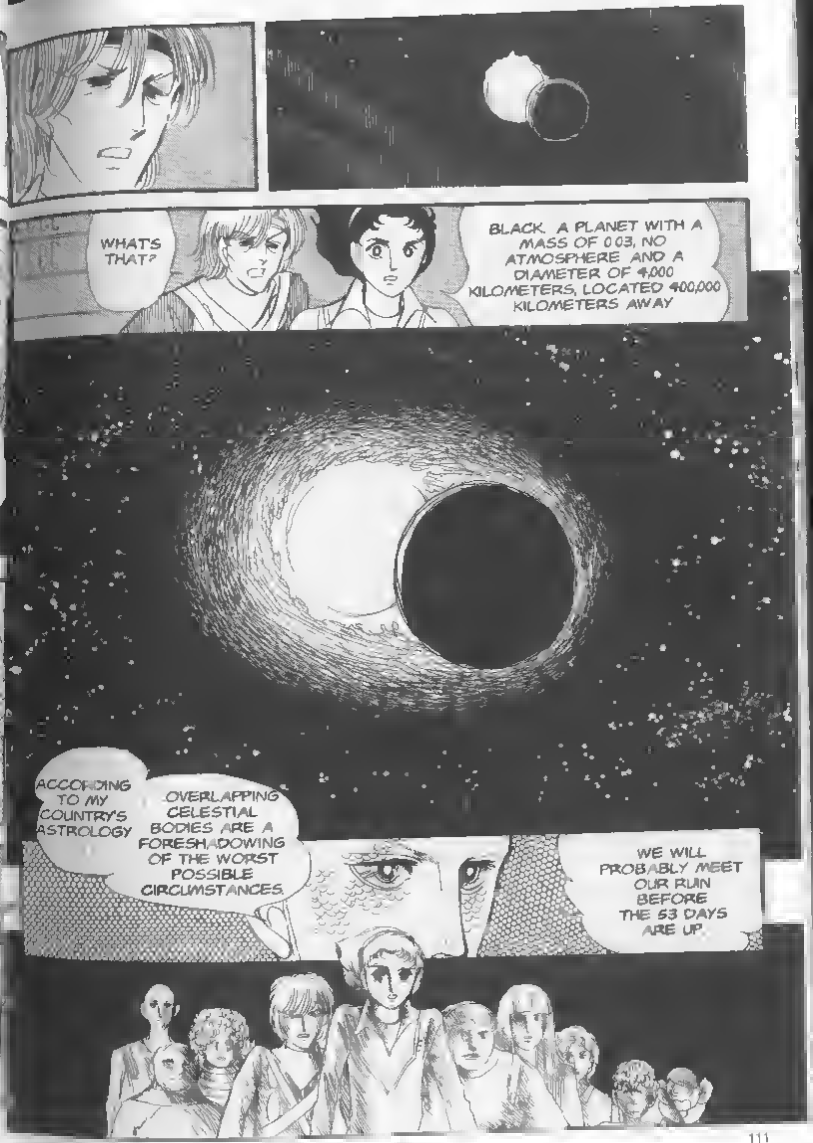
WHY, YOU DRUNK!
CUT IT OUT!!
LOUSY TERRAN!


WHAT'S GOING ON HERE!?
AGH!
YOU SABAN MORON!
YOU STINKING
BARBARIAN
FAP
TUMP
MENEER THIS IS INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR FOR SOMEONE LIKE YOU.
WHAT'S THIS 'MENNI, MENNI' BUSINESS!? MY NAME'S FROL!
I AM VID-MENEER
AND YOU ARE MENEER
YOU ARE STILL SLENDER AND SOFT
ALL RIGHT! SO I'M SKINNY!
IS THAT WHY YOU PULLED ME OUT OF THE FIGHT!?
THANKS FOR NOTHING!
hiccup
I'LL NEVER TALK TO YOU AGAIN!!
WOOSH
WAH
NUUM!
FROL
AH!!
YOU BIG OX!
PUT ME DOWN!

WELL?
NOPE
STILL NO IMAGE
HM. LET'S TRY AGAIN. MAYBE THE A CIRCUIT SHOULD HAVE BEEN THE OTHER WAY AROUND
DON'T STRAIN YOURSELF.
NO PROBLEM.
FROL, NUUM'S BEEN GIVING YOU THE EYE. WHY DON'T YOU GIVE HIM A LITTLE SMILE?
I'M GETTING STEAMED! I'M GOING TO GO TAKE A SHOWER.
FROL!
What's he mean, "slender and soft"?
That green lizard!
So I'm short and have narrow shoulders!
BATH!
SHHH

YO FROL IS THE SCREEN WORKING?
NOT YET
WOW! WHERE'D YOU GET ALL THOSE SCARS, AMAZON?
THIS ISN'T MUCH BY OUR STANDARDS. HUNTING IS A BIG DEAL ON MY PLANET.
MY OLD MAN'S GOT SCARS ON EVERY INCH OF HIS BODY
THE WATER PRESSURE'S LOW.
RIGHT
KLK
BWOOSH
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "THE WATER PRESSURE'S LOW"!?
PSH
WAH
THE MAIN WATER VALVE!
GLUB, GLUB, GLUB.
KLK

YEESH! I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO DROWN!
THIS IS YOUR FAULT AMAZON!
WAHH!
THAT WAS COLD!
...
FR
YOU DON'T HAVE TO GLARE LIKE THAT I'LL RUN THE DRYER OVER EVERYTHING WHEN I'M DONE!
SLAM
FR
THE ONLY EXPLANATION I CAN THINK OF IS THAT SHE DOESN'T REALIZE SHE'S A GIRL!
TADA-A-A!
TADA! FROL IS—


WHAT'S THAT?
BLACK. A PLANET WITH A MASS OF 0.03, NO ATMOSPHERE AND A DIAMETER OF 4,000 KILOMETERS, LOCATED 400,000 KILOMETERS AWAY
ACCORDING TO MY COUNTRY'S ASTROLOGY
OVERLAPPING CELESTIAL BODIES ARE A FORESHADOWING OF THE WORST POSSIBLE CIRCUMSTANCES.
WE WILL PROBABLY MEET OUR RUIN BEFORE THE 53 DAYS ARE UP.

AS YOU CAN SEE HERE

THIS IS THE WHITE'S CURRENT POSITION

THIS IS THIS SYSTEM'S SUN WHICH WE'LL CALL "BLUE"

BLUE HAS AN EQUATORIAL DIAMETER OF 140,000 KILOMETERS, A DENSITY OF 2.3 A SURFACE TEMPERATURE OF 8000 DEGREES CENTIGRADE AND A MASS OF 32,000

DISTANCE of the PLANET BLACK from the SUN, BLUE = 2,400,000 KILOMETERS

ORBIT of the WHITE

" the PLANET

WHEW! FOR A LITTLE SQUIRT OF A SUN, IT SURE IS HOT

SO UNTIL NOW, IT'S BEEN HIDDEN FROM US BY BLACK

NUUM, THAT IDEA OF YOURS THAT OVERLAPPING STARS ARE A BAD OMEN IS JUST A SUPERSTITION. ASTROLOGY ISN'T SCIENCE

DO YOU HAVE SEASONS ON YOUR PLANET?

SURE, WE HAVE SEASONS.

THE POSITIONS OF THE PLANETS AND STARS DETERMINE THE SEASONS, AND THE SEASONS IN TURN DETERMINE THE CYCLE OF LIFE

IN SUMMER, THINGS BLOOM -- IN WINTER, THEY WITHER. DURING THE DAY WE MOVE ABOUT -- AT NIGHT, WE SLEEP. IN THE SPRING, LIFE AWAKENS AND CREATURES MATE

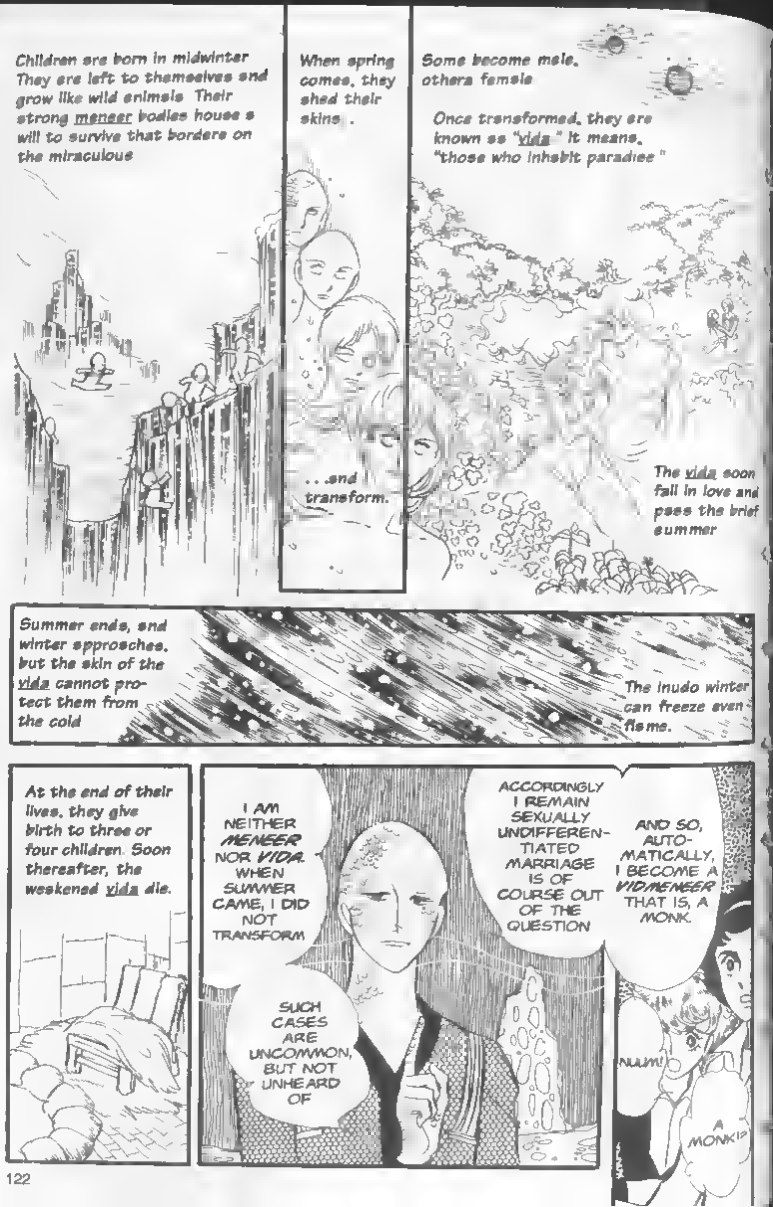
LIFE AND DEATH. THIS IS FATE

ASTROLOGY IS A SCIENCE THAT HAS BEEN DEVELOPED ON MY PLANET THROUGH THE STUDY OF NATURE

AHH, NOTHING LIKE A HOT SHOWER
HEY, THE SCREEN'S WORKING!
WAH!
WAH!
WAH-H!
?
TA-TADA!
HM? WHAT ARE YOU BLUSHING ABOUT?
IT COULDN'T BE
WHAT IS IT?
!!!
FROL!?
WHAT!?
FROL!?
A WOMAN!?
AMAZON!
I-IT'S THE TRUTH!
YOU BLOCK HEAD!
TAKE IT EASY, FROL!
I DON'T FIGHT WITH WOMEN!
DO YOU NEED GLASSES OR WHAT!?
YO, TADA!
LET'S GET DINNER READY IT'S OUR TURN TODAY
FROL, AMAZON SAYS HE SAW YOU NUDE FROM TOP TO TOE IN THE SHOWER. AND HE CLAIMS YOU'RE A WOMAN.
DINN—
HUH!?
SEE FOR YOURSELVES! SHOW HIM SOME SNIPS AND SNAILS AND PUPPY DOG TAILS AND SEE IF HE SHOWS ANY INTEREST!
GET A GRIP!
WELL, THEN, ARE YOU A MAN?
THE EASIEST THING TO DO IS ASK
TADA!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT!? WOMEN HAVE BREASTS, RIGHT!?
HELL, TADA HAS A BIGGER CHEST THAN I DO!!
ON WHAT BASIS ARE YOU CALLING ME A WOMAN!?

BEFORE THE TEST YOU MUST HAVE UNDERGONE A GENDER TEST LIKE THE REST OF US. WHICH WERE YOU DETERMINED TO BE, A MAN OR A WOMAN?
WHICH
WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE!? I'M A MAN, DAMMIT!!
THE LAST TEST IS NO GAME!!
IF YOU'RE A WOMAN JUST SAY SO! OR IS THERE SOME REASON YOU CAN'T SAY SO?
I-
WAIT A MINUTE! MAYBE FROL IS THE ELEVENTH!
NO
NO, I'M NOT THE -
THEN WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY SO FROM THE START?
NO, I'M TELLING YOU I--
YEAH! WHY DID YOU HIDE IT!?
HOLD IT!
YOU'RE A HERMAPHRODITE, AREN'T YOU.
YOU MEAN YOU HAVE BOTH MALE AND FEMALE ORGANS!?
YOU'RE BOTH A MAN AND A WOMAN!?
BUT THEN--
I'M NOT EITHER YET!
IF I PASS THIS TEST, I'LL GET PERMISSION TO BECOME A MAN!!
HERMA--
HUH!!
AS I'VE BEEN SAYING ALL ALONG
SHE IS MEMEER

IT IS DIFFICULT TO FIND A DIRECT TRANSLATION OF OUR WORD 'MENEER' IN STANDARD GALACTIC PERHAPS THE CLOSEST SUBSTITUTE IS 'ANGEL'
WHERE I COME FROM, WE'RE JUST CALLED 'KIDS'
THE UNDIFFERENTIATED FORMS OF BOTH SEXES LIE DORMANT WITHIN THE BODY, AND AT A CERTAIN AGE THE INDIVIDUAL IS NEITHER MALE NOR FEMALE IN ANY SENSE
WHEN THE SECOND GROWTH PERIOD IS REACHED, ONE OR THE OTHER GENDER DEVELOPS AND THE INDIVIDUAL MATURES UNISEXUALLY
But with that personality, she'd be a handful as a girlfriend
And that foul language
SAKE
#%@!!
WHAT ARE YOU GRINNING ABOUT?
NOTHING!
WELL HERMAPHRODITISM IS NORMAL AMONG GASTROPODS AND OTHER ANIMALS
SOME FISH ARE HERMAPHRODITIC
AS ARE SEA HARES, SNAILS
SO HOW SHOULD WE DEAL WITH FROL FROM NOW ON?
AS A MAN! I'M GOING TO BECOME A MAN DAMMIT!!
Anyway, Frol intends to become a man, so that's that
Does seem kind of a shame, though...
Well, at least now I know my intuition was half right.
YOU SEE
MY PLANET IS POLY-GAMOUS
WOW
HAREMS, HUH!?
MEN GOVERN AND WOMEN WORK
EVERY MAN HAS AN AVERAGE OF 4.5 WIVES AND EVERY WOMAN BEARS AN AVERAGE OF 5.5 CHILDREN
DID YOU HAVE FROL FIGURED OUT FROM THE BEGINNING, NUUM?
YES, IT'S SO EASY TO SPOT ANOTHER ONE LIKE MYSELF
THE PROBLEM IS
ONLY THE OLDEST CHILD CAN BECOME A MAN!
NUUM!?
GEH!
ON MY PLANET, INUDO
WE ARE ALSO BIOLOGICALLY BISEXUAL
Mid-summer
Sun A
Sun B
INUDO
CIRCLES TWO SUNS
Mid-winter
IN AN ELONGATED ELLIPSE
IN OUR LIFETIMES, WE EXPERIENCE BUT ONE WINTER
AND ONE SUMMER
THE PERIOD OF REVOLUTION IS SIXTY FOUR TERRAN YEARS.


Children are born in midwinter. They are left to themselves and grow like wild animals. Their strong meneer bodies house a will to survive that borders on the miraculous
When spring comes, they shed their skins.
. . .and transform.
Some become male, others female
Once transformed, they are known as "vida." It means, "those who inhabit paradise"
The vida soon fall in love and pass the brief summer
Summer ends, and winter approaches, but the skin of the vida cannot protect them from the cold
The Inudo winter can freeze even flame.
At the end of their lives, they give birth to three or four children. Soon thereafter, the weakened vida die.
I AM NEITHER MENEER NOR VIDA. WHEN SUMMER CAME, I DID NOT TRANSFORM
SUCH CASES ARE UNCOMMON, BUT NOT UNHEARD OF
ACCORDINGLY I REMAIN SEXUALLY UNDIFFERENTIATED MARRIAGE IS OF COURSE OUT OF THE QUESTION
AND SO, AUTOMATICALLY, I BECOME A VIDMENEER THAT IS, A MONK.
NUUM!
A MONK!?

WE VIDMENEER LIVE LONG LIVES. SOME SEE AS MANY AS TEN OR MORE WINTERS. I AM STILL THIRTY EIGHT TERRAN YEARS OLD. I HAVE JUST PASSED MY FIRST SUMMER.
AS LONG AS I HAVE THESE SCALES, I CAN LIVE FOR YEARS AND YEARS.
IF YOU'RE A MONK, NUUM, WHAT'S THE THEME OF YOUR RELIGION?
"FATE."
WHA IS IT NOW?
WE'RE MOVING OUT OF ORBIT!!!

SINCE WE NOTICED IT ON THE 18TH DAY

WE'VE CONTINUED TO STEADILY MOVE OUT OF ORBIT

THE SHIP IS MOVING AWAY FROM THE PLANET BLACK, AND TOWARDS BLUE -- THE SUN!

BLACK

WE'LL CRASH!!

CRASH !?

WE WON'T CRASH. LOOK AT THE DIAGRAM

THIS IS WHERE THE WHITE WILL BE ON THE FIFTY-THIRD DAY, ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND KILO METERS FROM THE SUN

PLANET BLACK

LOCATION ON THE 53rd DAY

THE WHITE

PHEW !

IT SEEMS THE TWO EXPLOSIONS THAT OCCURRED AFTER WE BOARDED SENT US OUT OF ORBIT

WE'RE LIKE THE BIRD FLYING TOWARD THE SUN!

ON MY PLANET WE HAVE A LEGEND ABOUT A WHITE BIRD THAT TRIES TO FLY TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SUN AND IS SWALLOWED UP BY IT

WE HAVE A STORY LIKE THAT ON MY PLANET TOO! A GIRL WANTS TO CROSS THE SKY, SO SHE PLANTS A TOWERING VINE AND CLIMBS UP THE FLOWERS TO THE SKY

BUT WHEN THE FLOWERS WITHER THE GIRL FALLS BACK TO THE GROUND HEADFIRST

WE HAVE A SIMILAR TALE ON TERRA ABOUT THE FLIGHT OF ICARUS!

THE GIANT MADE THREE SPHERES THE FIRST BECAME THE SUN THE SECOND BECAME THE LAND, BUT THE THIRD WAS FLAWED, SO THE GIANT CRUSHED IT WITH HIS HAMMER, AND THE FRAGMENTS BECAME THE STARS.

WE HAVE THE SAME LEGEND ON MY PLANET!

LONG AGO THERE WERE TWO SUNS BUT ONE DISINTEGRATED AND BECAME THE STARS

THE BASIC ELEMENTS OF THE COSMOS ARE THE SAME EVERYWHERE THE STARS, THE LAND AND THE SUN

IT'S NOT SURPRISING THAT CREATION STORIES ARE SIMILAR EVERYWHERE

The Frol incident became an impetus for the examinees to share stories of their home worlds.

The atmosphere quickly became much more congenial.

(And the presence of women also had an effect -- even though they were only half female.)

The days passed uneventfully

But at each meal, as the table was set, the number of plates were a reminder of that extra person

On the twenty-eighth day, the cabin temperature, which had been a steady fourteen degrees celsius, rose two degrees

By the twenty-ninth day, it had risen another three degrees
On the thirtieth day, the temperature reached twenty-two degrees celsius
IT'S THE SUN
THIS SHIP WAS BUILT TO ABSORB ANY AMOUNT OF EXTERNAL HEAT!
SO CRANK UP THE AIR CONDITIONER.
WHAT'S THIS?
DATA FROM THE HEAT TANK.
A PORTION OF THE TANK IS BROKEN AND CAN'T COMPLETELY ABSORB THE HEAT! AS A RESULT, FIFTY-EIGHT PERCENT IS BEING RELEASED INSIDE THE SHIP
THE AIR CONDITIONING AND COLD STORAGE ROOMS ARE NO HELP
WHAT A HEAP OF JUNK!
HEY!!
THIS SHIP IS HEADED TOWARD THE SUN. RIGHT!? THAT MEANS IT'LL JUST KEEP GETTING
ON THE FIFTY-THIRD DAY IT WILL BE FIFTY-ONE DEGREES CELSIUS
FIFTY-ONE DEGREES!?
HOTTER AND HOTTER PRECISELY
HOW HOT!?
WE'LL BE BAKED ALIVE!!

YOU SAID YOU'RE THE YOUNGEST DIDN'T YOU?
RIGHT
IN TWO OR THREE YEARS
WHEN I ENTER THE SECOND GROWTH PERIOD, MY BODY TEMPERATURE WILL RISE FOUR DEGREES AND I'LL BE INJECTED WITH HORMONES FEMALE HORMONES
SIGH. IT WAS GREAT WHEN WE WERE KIDS AND WE ALL RAN AROUND PLAYING TOGETHER
I've seen my older sisters' weddings
SO WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU BECOME A WOMAN?
USUALLY YOU GET MARRIED RIGHT AWAY
WHAT IF YOU AREN'T GIVEN HORMONES?
YOU JUST TURN INTO A MAN OR A WOMAN NATURALLY
...but they were nothing compared to my brother's coming-of-age ceremony
BUT THEY SAY THE CURRENT ONE TO-FIVE POPULATION RATIO IS THE BEST WAY TO PRESERVE THE PEACE
THEN THE CULTURE OF WOMEN MUST BE HIGHLY DEVELOPED ON YOUR PLANET. IT MUST BE A PLEASANT PLACE FOR A WOMAN TO LIVE
SURE, WOMEN ARE PRETTY ON THE OUTSIDE, ANYWAY
BUT THAT'S IT
If you only get to live once, I'd rather become a man and have that kind of fuss made over me.

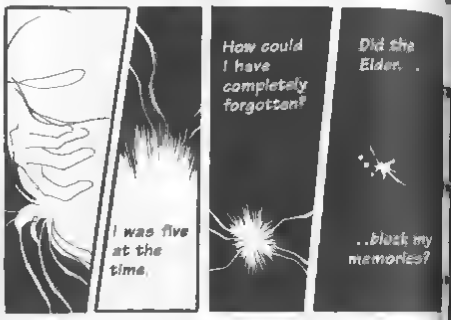
SO THAT'S WHY YOU'RE TAKING THE TEST
BECAUSE THEY'LL LET YOU BECOME A MAN IF YOU PASS.
IN AN AGE LIKE THIS, WHEN HALF THE REPRESENTATIVES TO THE INTERSTELLAR PARLIAMENT ARE WOMEN
IS IT REALLY SO GREAT BEING A MAN? WHERE I COME FROM, WOMEN GET FIRST RATE TREATMENT
AND WE'RE MONO GAMOUS.
FLIP
A SPECIES LIKE FROL'S IS PRETTY RARE
WHAT ARE YOU PULLING OUT MY CHAIR FOR?
WHOOPS. JUST HABIT
JUST LEAVE FROL ALONE, GOT IT!?
I'LL GET IT
FAP
HEY! DON'T SHOW OFF JUST BECAUSE YOUR ARMS ARE A LITTLE LONGER THAN MINE
SOMEDAY I'LL BECOME A MAN AND GROW BIGGER THAN YOU EVER WILL!
So that's why he's so sensitive about his size
HEH HEH
He's fine just the size he is
If "he" becomes a woman
..."she'll" be a real beauty

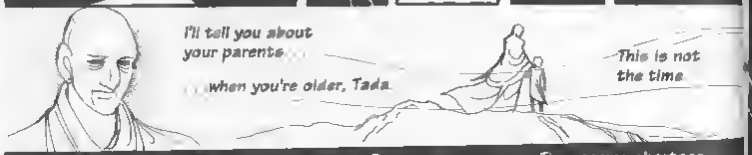
THAT'S THE KIND OF TEMPERATURE THAT WILL MAKE YOU DROP DEAD IN YOUR TRACKS!
COME ON, NOBODY'S GONNA DIE THAT EASILY
THIS IS DEPRESSING
THE CHANGE IN ORBIT CAN'T BE THE ELEVENTH PERSON'S DOING, CAN IT?
I DON'T KNOW
HOW MUCH OF THIS IS THE TEST
AND HOW MUCH IS THE SCHEMING OF THE ELEVENTH?
FROL !!
IT'S HOT!
WHAM
THESE CLOTHES ARE HEAT AND COLD RESISTANT! THEY SHOULD BE COMFORT ABLE!
STOP EXPOSING THAT PALE LITTLE BODY OF YOURS!
LIKE I SAID, JUST LEAVE FROL ALONE!
JUST YOU WAIT AND SEE WHEN I BECOME A MAN
I'LL HAVE A BODY LIKE A SUPERMAN!
WHUMP
WAHH!

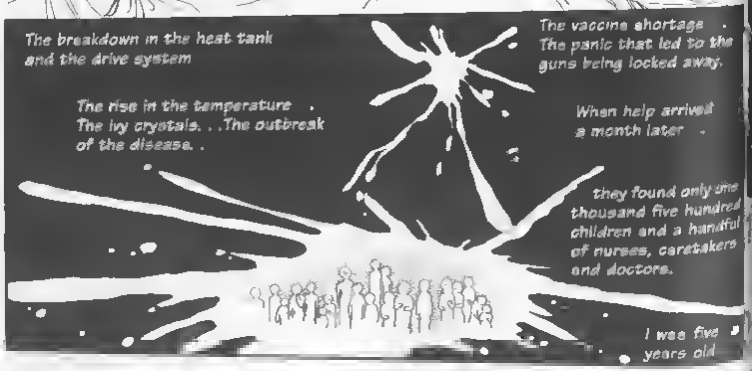
IVY!
IT'S NOT JUST HERE I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S BECAUSE OF THE RISE IN TEMPERATURE OR WHAT, BUT IT'S GROWING LIKE CRAZY EVERY-WHERE!
IT'S TURNING INTO A JUNGLE!
The Ivy is growing
It will continue to grow.
The temperature is rising.
It will continue to rise
It will keep growing and growing
And then what?

TADA! WHERE'RE YOU GOING? YOU KNOW WE'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO GO ANYWHERE ALONE!
TO THE LIBRARY! I NEED TO CHECK SOMETHING OUT
WHAT?
FLIP FLIP FLIP
THE ENCYCLOPEDIA UNDER 'C.'
IT SHOULD BE ON RACK A, 428
IT'S NOT HERE!
Only "C" is missing!?
WHAT DID YOU WANT TO LOOK UP?
"CONDUCTIVE IVY"
AH! I THINK I SAW VOLUME C IN THE FILE ROOM WHEN WE WERE RUMMAGING THROUGH IT THE OTHER DAY!
FILE ROOM
WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN HERE AGAIN?
GET OFF OUR BACKS! WE'RE LOOKING FOR A WAY TO GET RID OF THE IVY
DID YOU FIND IT?
HERE IT IS
"CONDUCTIVE IVY - A METALLIC PLANT PRODUCED IN THE TEMPERATE ZONES OF 120 PLANETS IN THE SEGUL SYSTEM
"A BIO ENGINEERED VARIATION IS USED FOR WIRING IN PLACE OF COPPER AND NICHROME
"THE EPIDERMIS ABSORBS HEAT EFFICIENTLY, STIMULATING GROWTH."

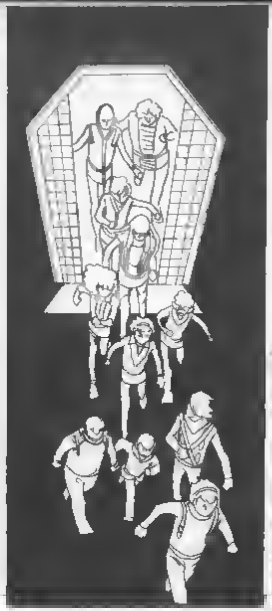
"BUT WHEN THE ABSORBED HEAT EXCEEDS A CERTAIN LEVEL, THE IVY PROTECTS ITSELF BY PRODUCING WHITE CRYSTALS THAT SERVE TO INSULATE THE IVY
"IN SOME INSTANCES, THE CRYSTALS PRODUCE THE VIRUS THAT CAUSES "DELL'S RED SPOT DISEASE"
"...NAMED FOR ITS DISCOVERER VINNIK DELL."
HIGH FEVER
RED SPOTS
VOMITING
LOCAL PARALYSIS
PREVENTED WITH A VACCINE CREATED FROM WEAK LIVING GERMS
VACCINE...
CAN ONLY MAKE SO MUCH..
TADA!
THE MICE!
THE MICE ARE ALL GONE!!
CHILDREN? WE HAVE FIVE THOUSAND CHILDREN BELOW THE AGE OF TWELVE ALONE
I WAS ON THIS SHIP
WITH THE NUMBER OF MICE WE HAVE
WE CAN BARELY MAKE ENOUGH VACCINE FOR TWO THOUSAND
THERE'S ONLY ENOUGH FOR CHILDREN BELOW THE AGE OF SIX.
HERE YOU ARE, HONEY
SAY "AH."
DELL'S RED SPOT DISEASE IS SPREAD THROUGH THE AIR. IT CAN'T BE CONTAINED
IF HELP DOESN'T ARRIVE WITHIN A WEEK, EVERYONE ON THIS SHIP WILL DIE
WHERE WILL WE PUT THE BODIES?
WE HAVE ONLY TEN THOUSAND VACUUM PACKS
DOCTOR! GIVE ME THE VACCINE! MY SON IS EIGHT YEARS OLD!
WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY FAMILY!?
DON'T TOUCH THAT MOUSE!
KSHHH






The breakdown in the heat tank and the drive system
The rise in the temperature . The ivy crystals. . .The outbreak of the disease. .
The vaccine shortage . The panic that led to the guns being locked away.
When help arrived a month later .
they found only one thousand five hundred children and a handful of nurses, caretakers and doctors.
I was five years old.

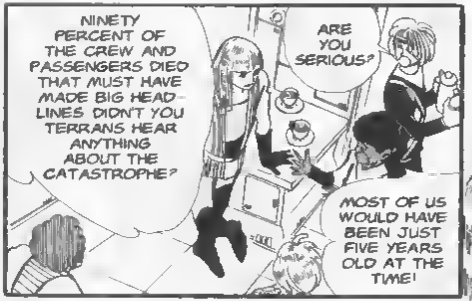
It was a ship of death!



WHERE'S THE IVY YOU WERE GROWING, TOTO?
HERE.

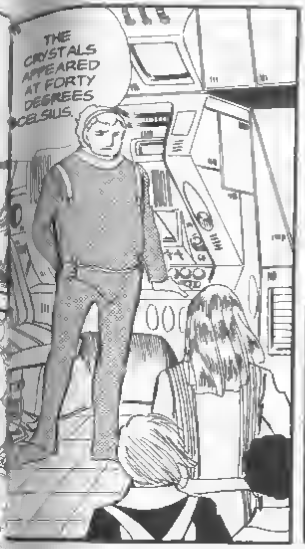
IF TADA'S STORY IS TRUE
WE MIGHT BE IN SERIOUS DANGER!

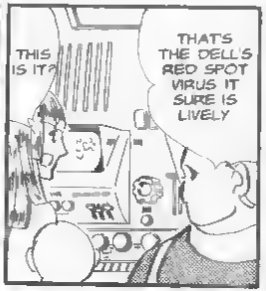
CAN YOU HEAT THAT TANK?
I'LL TRY
GIVE ME TWO OR THREE HOURS I'LL LET YOU KNOW THE RESULTS AS SOON AS I GET THEM.

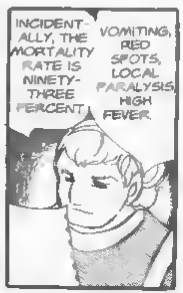

NINETY PERCENT OF THE CREW AND PASSENGERS DIED THAT MUST HAVE MADE BIG HEADLINES. DIDN'T YOU TERRANS HEAR ANYTHING ABOUT THE CATASTROPHE?
ARE YOU SERIOUS?
MOST OF US WOULD HAVE BEEN JUST FIVE YEARS OLD AT THE TIME!

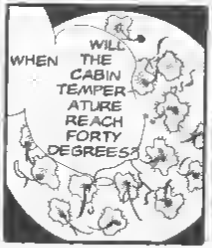
SHEESH. WHAT A COINCIDENCE
NOW WE KNOW WHY TADA KNEW HIS WAY AROUND THE SHIP

Coincidence . . ?
Why did I end up back on this ship? It was the Elder who told me to apply to the university
I wonder
Did he know this would happen?


THE CRYSTALS APPEARED AT FORTY DEGREES CELSIUS.

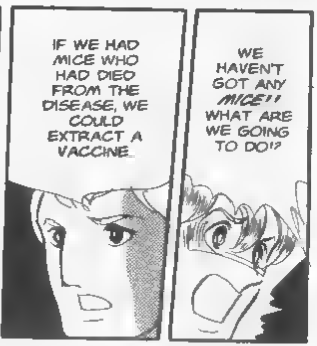

THIS IS IT?
THAT'S THE DELL'S RED SPOT VIRUS IT SURE IS LIVELY


INCIDENTALLY, THE MORTALITY RATE IS NINETY-THREE PERCENT.
VOMITING, RED SPOTS, LOCAL PARALYSIS, HIGH FEVER.


WHEN WILL THE CABIN TEMPERATURE REACH FORTY DEGREES?

IN NINE DAYS!
THE FORTY FOURTH DAY!

WHAT!? YOU MEAN WE'RE GOING TO DIE!?
IN NINE DAYS!?
IS THERE ANY TREATMENT FOR IT?


IF WE HAD MICE WHO HAD DIED FROM THE DISEASE, WE COULD EXTRACT A VACCINE.
WE HAVEN'T GOT ANY MICE!! WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO!?

I RECOMMEND PUSHING THE RED BUTTON. THIS IS A SCRAMBLE IF THERE EVER WAS ONE!
LIVES ARE AT STAKE!

PUSH THE BUTTON!? AND FAIL THE TEST!?
THIS IS THE LAST TEST! WE'VE COME THIS FAR!
WHERE ARE YOUR PRIORITIES!?
THE UNIVERSITY MAY NOT HAVE ANTICIPATED SUCH A SERIOUS ACCIDENT!
I'M PREPARED TO SUE THE UNIVERSITY ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE TEST IS FLAWED!
NO WAY! WHO KNOWS WHO'LL WIN THE LAWSUIT!? I'M NOT TAKING THIS TEST FOR FUN, LIKE KING HERE!
MY REPUTATION IS AT STAKE!
MY LIFE IS AT STAKE! WHETHER I'LL BECOME A MAN OR A WOMAN!
I AGREE WITH ROCKHEAD WE ARE HEADED FOR DISASTER IT'S AS CERTAIN AS FATE
BEFORE A TRAGEDY TAKES PLACE
FATE? MAYBE
BUT EVEN FATE LEAVES ROOM FOR CHANCE!
WE STILL HAVE NINE DAYS!
LET'S TRY TO THINK OF A SOLUTION!
I GUESS OUR ONLY HOPE IS TO FIX THE HEAT TANK
THE LEFT SIDE IS BROKEN
THIS HAS BEEN WORKED ON BEFORE
THE ORIGINAL CREW MUST HAVE BEEN DESPERATE TO FIX IT, TOO
I WONDER IF IT WAS CAUSED BY A FAILED WARP
IT LOOKS LIKE A SUDDEN CHANGE IN HEAT DISTRIBUTION LED TO THE BREAKDOWN
THAT SUN MAY BE A WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING AFTER ALL
Day thirty-six -- thirty-two degrees celsius

Day thirty-seven -- thirty-three degrees celsius.
KLINK
WHO COOKED TODAY!? THERES A FORK IN MY SOUP!!
KLANG
DO YOU WANT TO PUT A HOLE IN MY STOMACH!?
I-- I MUST HAVE DROPPED IT IN ACCIDENT-ALLY
TAKE IT EASY, KING. IN THIS HEAT, NONE OF US ARE ON THE BALL
DO YOU THINK YOU CAN FIX THE TANK?
I DON'T KNOW
GRK
WE HAVE ONLY SEVEN MORE DAYS!
I'M DOING THE BEST I CAN
HFF
ZZZAAAWW
GUNGA!?
ZAPPA
BLAM
THE WITCH!
GET DOWN!!
IT'S TOO LATE, TADA!!
YOU MAY BE KING BACK IN THE KOMOF DOMAIN, BUT HERE YOU'RE JUST A WASTE OF SPACE WHO HASN'T GOT A DAMN THING TO CONTRIBUTE!
BWAM
WHO ARE YOU TO COMPLAIN WHEN YOU CAN'T DO ANYTHING YOURSELF!?
STOP IT!!
THE DIS-COMFORT INDEX IS CLIMBING
THE SLIGHTEST THING SETS US OFF
I JUST FEEL LIKE PUSHING THE BUTTON AND ENDING THIS WHOLE THING
WHAT A TEST!
Day thi
eight--
thirty-fi
degrees
celsius

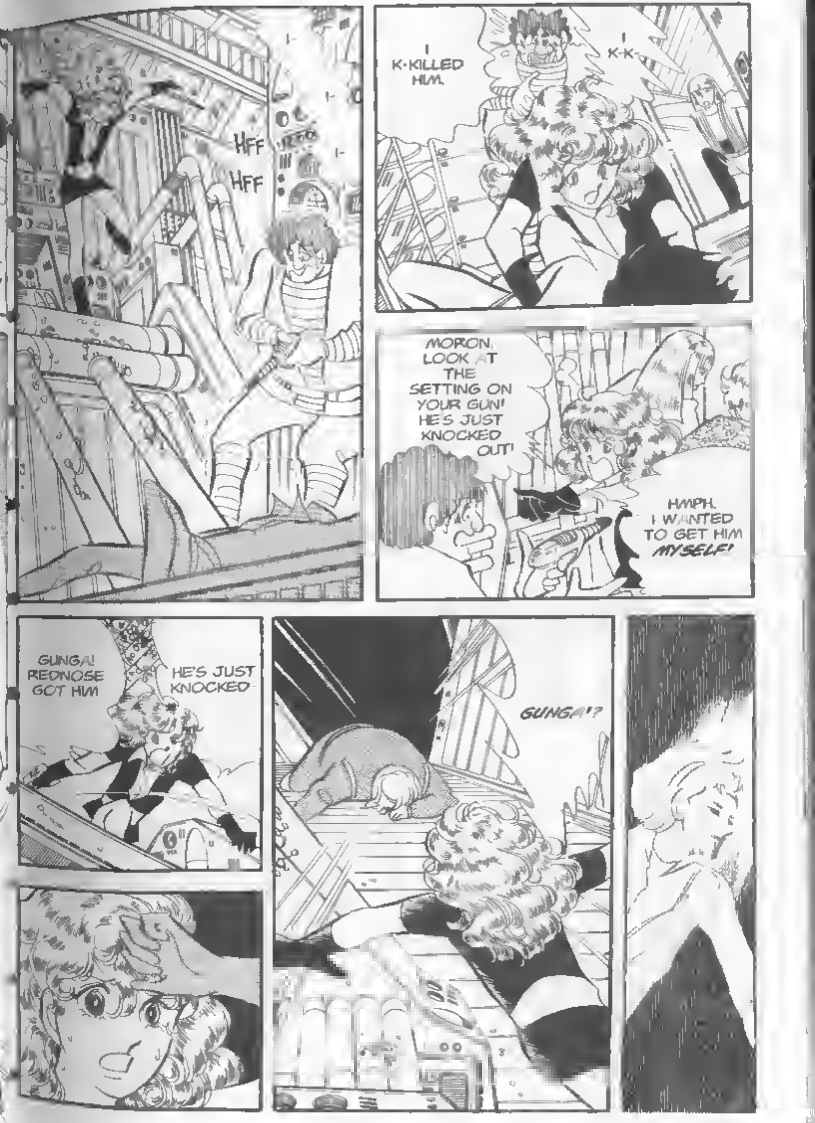
THE RIGHT TANK WILL GO TOO!
KEEP DOWN!
KRK KRK
IT LOOKS LIKE THE SAFETY MECHANISM ON THE RIGHT SIDE IS WORKING
TANK ROOM!! WHAT HAPPENED!? THE CABIN TEMPERATURE JUST ROSE THREE DEGREES!
YOU'RE
YOU'RE SAYING THERE'S NOTHING LEFT TO TRY?
WHY ISN'T THERE ANY VACCINE!?
IF WE HAD VACCINE WE WOULDN'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THE HEAT!
FORGET IT THERE'S NO MICE AND NO TIME

IT IS FATE
I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ANY LECTURES FROM YOU
JUST WHOSE FAULT IS THIS, ANYWAY!?
STOP IT, KING!
SURE, YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY YOU'VE ALREADY BEEN VACCINATED AGAINST DELL'S RED SPOT DISEASE
LISTEN TO ME I JUST GOT AN IDEA
NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, YOU'LL SURVIVE!
THAT'S RIGHT I ALWAYS THOUGHT IT WAS STRANGE
WHY IS IT THAT YOU JUST HAPPENED TO COME BACK TO THIS SHIP?
AND WHY ARE THERE ELEVEN PEOPLE ON THIS SHIP!?
JUST A COINCI DENCE!? HM!?
WELL!?

THIS IS HIS FAULT! MURDER ER!!
NO
SHISH
FAP
TMP TMP TMP
KLIK
WHY DID THIS HAVE TO HAPPEN NOW!? THERE'S NO TIME!
WHERE ARE THE REST OF THE EXPLOSIVES!?
KLATTER KLATTER
KING!!
OPEN THIS DOOR!
BAM
OPEN THE DOOR!
BAM BAM
KING!!
THERE'S ANOTHER PASSAGE THIS WAY!
HE'S THE ELEVENTH!
KILL HIM AND EXTRACT HIS SPINAL FLUID!!
GET A HOLD OF YOURSELF! ALL OF YOU!
TADA'S SPINAL FLUID ISN'T GOING TO HELP ANYBODY!!
HE'S THE ELEVENTH!
HE'S THE ONE WHO GOT US INTO THIS, AND HE'S GOING TO PAY!
IF WE DON'T KILL HIM, HE'LL KILL US! DON'T LET HIM ESCAPE!
FROL, ARE YOU CLEAR-HEADED?
IT'S HOT, BUT, YEAH, I GUESS SO

YOU SAID YOU'RE A GOOD SHOT, DIDN'T YOU? YOU'VE GOT TO FIND TADA AND SHOOT HIM BEFORE ANYONE ELSE DOES!
SET YOUR GUN TO THE LOWEST SETTING AND KNOCK HIM OUT DON'T KILL HIM.
THIS HEAT HAS THROWN EVERYONE INTO A RAGE THERE'S NO TALKING TO THEM.
NOBODY'S ANGRIER THAN I AM! THIS COULD BLOW THE TEST!
WHETHER HE'S THE ELEVENTH OR NOT, WE CAN'T LET HIM BE MURDERED!
THERE HE IS!
ELEVATOR TWENTY EIGHT IS MOVING!
IT'S IN BLOCK 3B
FRO!
WE'LL SURROUND HIM!
KLANG
3-B
KLANG
IT'S HIM.
WHAT'S HE DOING? WHAT'S THAT SOUND?
KLANG
THE SOUND HAS STOPPED!
HE'S NEARBY BE CAREFUL!
KLAK
TADA
IT'S ME
I HAVEN'T GOT A GUN
GUNGA!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
I'M REMOVING THE EXPLOSIVES WILL YOU LISTEN TO MY PLAN?
YOUR PLAN ?
?
SLUMP
GUNGA!?

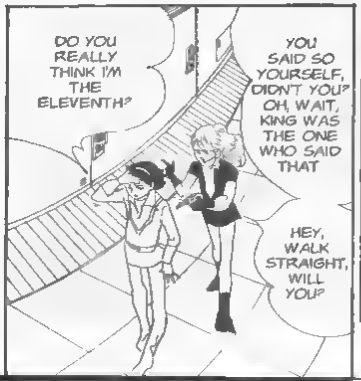
VIPP
LOUSY SHOT!
I'LL GET HIM!
TADA!
THAT WAY!
FROLS AFTER HIM
I GUESS THERE'S NO POINT
IN SHOUTING "WAIT"
WAHHH!
VIPP!


HFF
HFF
I K-KILLED HIM.
I K-K-
MORON. LOOK AT THE SETTING ON YOUR GUN! HE'S JUST KNOCKED OUT!
HMPH. I WANTED TO GET HIM MYSELF!
GUNGA! REDNOSE GOT HIM
HE'S JUST KNOCKED
GUNGA!?

YO FINALLY AWAKE?

COME ON THEY WANT TO INTER ROGATE YOU

THE HEAT IT'S LIKE A FRYING PAN
WAS I OUT LONG?
ABOUT THREE HOURS.
WHAT ABOUT GUNGA?
HE STARTED THROW ING UP
HE'S IN THE INFIR MARY


DO YOU REALLY THINK I'M THE ELEVENTH?
YOU SAID SO YOURSELF, DIDN'T YOU? OH, WAIT, KING WAS THE ONE WHO SAID THAT
HEY, WALK STRAIGHT, WILL YOU?

WHAP

FAP
WHMP

ALL RIGHT.
SHA!
CALL THE OTHERS! I'LL BE IN THE INFIRMARY WITH GUNGA. WE'LL TALK THERE

SHA
OUCH

I'VE NEVER BEEN SO DISGRACED IN MY LIFE! IF YOU WANT TO KILL ME, KILL ME!
I'D RATHER BE DEAD THAN HAVE PEOPLE THINK I'M AFRAID OF A GUN!

I'M SORRY
HERE
I'M GOING TO GUNGA'S ROOM. TELL THE OTHERS TO GATHER THERE

ALL RIGHT.
YOU'RE UP TO SOME THING, AREN'T YOU?

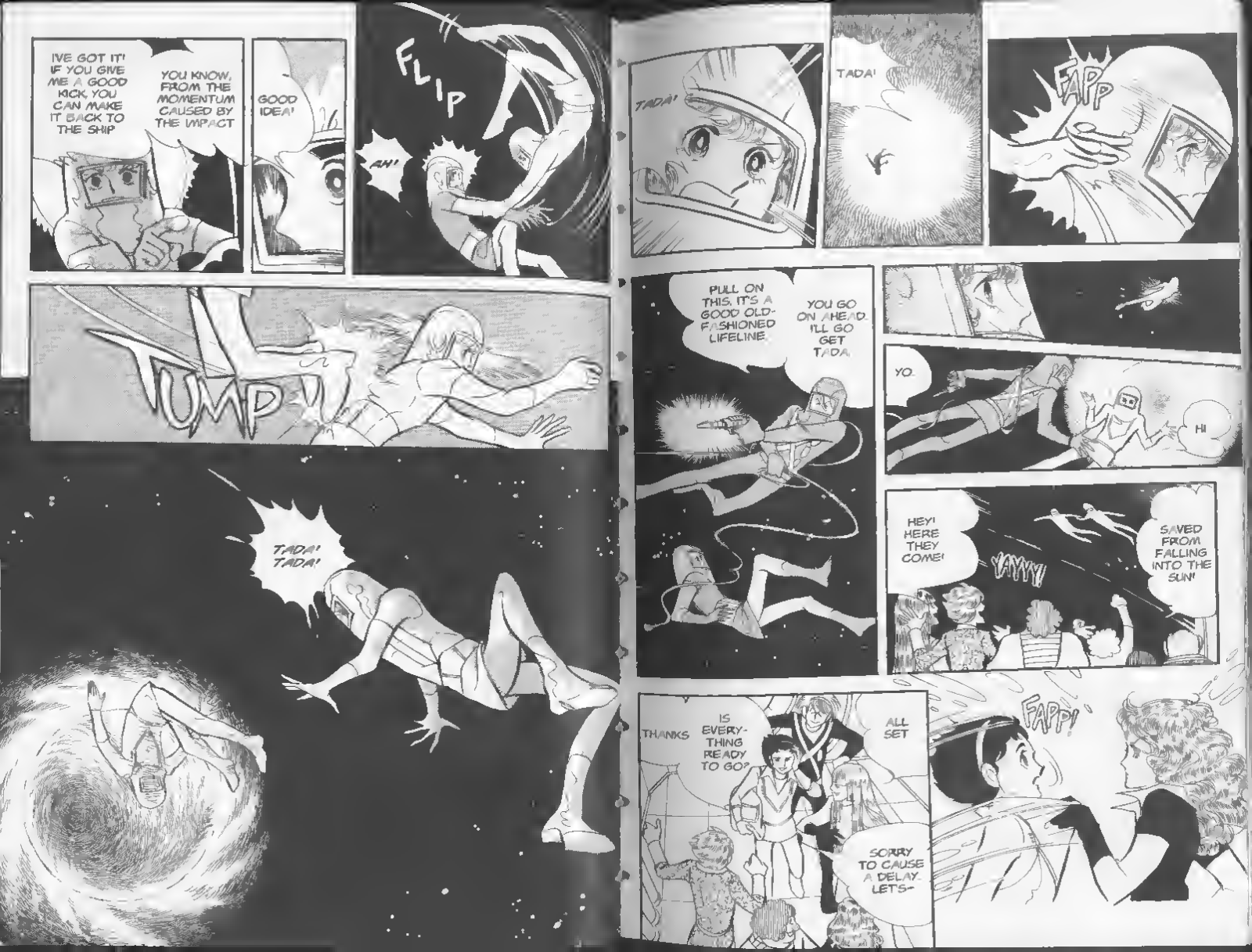
SHSH
TADA
I'M GLAD YOU CAME IVE BEEN THINKING WHAT WERE YOU ABOUT TO DO WITH THIS?
FIRST LET ME HAVE A LOOK AT YOU ARE YOU FEVER ISH?
HEY
FROL SAID YOUVE BEEN VOMITING
YOU WERE INFECTED WHEN YOU CONDUCTED THE EXPERIMENT, WEREN'T YOU?
DELL'S RED SPOT DISEASE?
BUT THIS IS AL READY-
FREEZE, TADA!
STAND BACK! I'M INFECTED!
WAH!
GUNG
DO YOU MEAN TO INFECT US ALL!?
KING

IT'S ALL RIGHT HE'S ALMOST HEALED! WHAT'S MORE, THE SYMPTOMS ARE SLIGHT THE DISEASE NEVER REALLY DEVELOPED
ONCE WE GET HIS FEVER DOWN, WE CAN EXTRACT VACCINE FROM HIS RED SPOTS!
VACCINE
VACCINE! THAT'S RIGHT! SO MY CHLORELLA CAME IN HANDY AFTER ALL!
A SIMPLE ANTIPYRETIC WILL BRING MY FEVER DOWN IN NO TIME.
RIGHT
IT'S A FIGHT AGAINST TIME! WE HAVE TO GET THE VACCINE BEFORE THE CRYSTALS FORM! NOW HOW ABOUT LOWERING THE TEMPERATURE OF THE SHIP.
LOWERING THE TEMPERATURE!?
IT WAS THE EXPLOSIONS THAT KNOCKED US OUT OF ORBIT.
WE CAN USE THE SAME TRICK AGAIN!
THIS SHIP IS HEADING TOWARD THE SUN WITH THE TOP OF THE RESIDENTIAL AREA FACING FORWARD.
WE'LL PUT ALL 120 OF THESE EXPLOSIVES IN AN ELEVATOR...
...AND BLOW THEM UP!
AH.

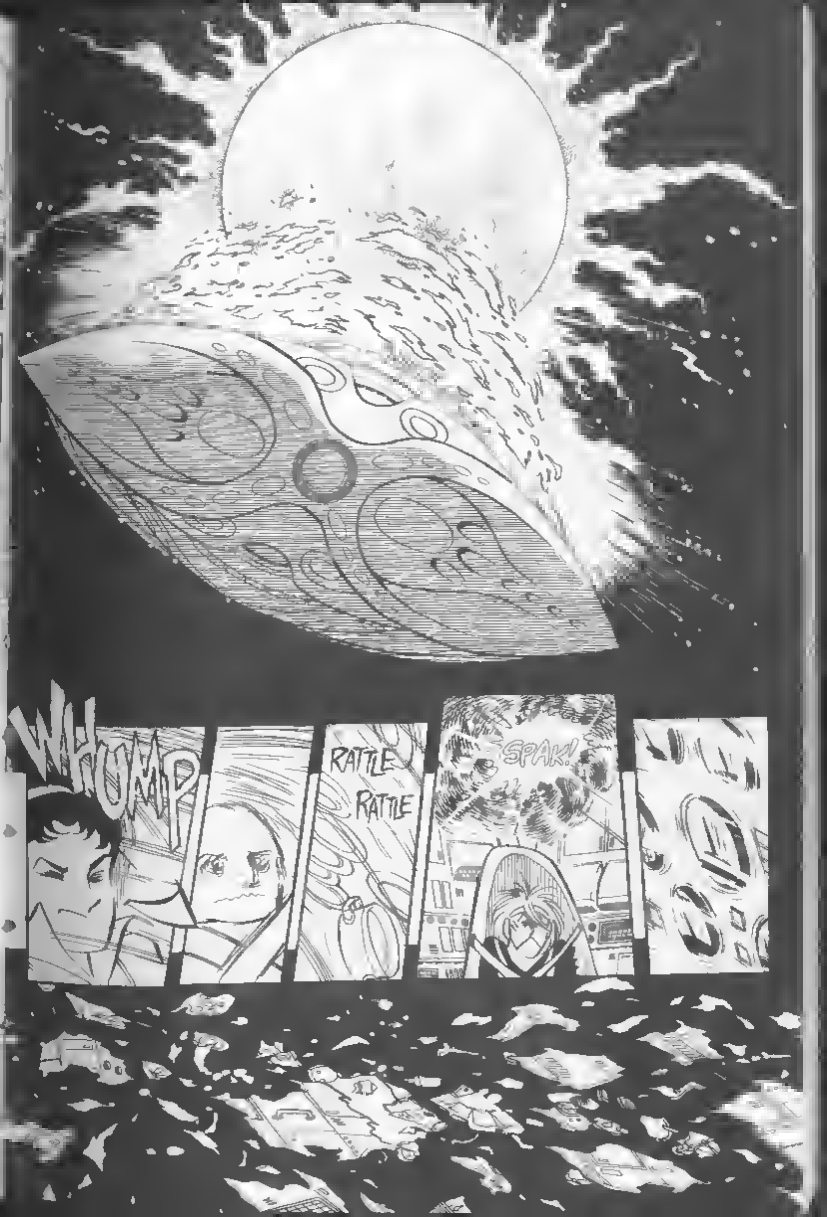
THAT'LL BLOW THE SHIP TO PIECES!
BUT IF IT WORKS, WE CAN GET AWAY FROM THE SUN
THE LOCATIONS OF THE EXPLOSIVES ARE MARKED ON THE MAP OF THE SHIP! IF WE ALL WORK TOGETHER WE CAN BE READY IN FOUR HOURS.
THAT'S ALL WELL AND GOOD, BUT WE CAN'T LET YOU OUT OF THIS ROOM.
WE NEED ALL THE HELP WE CAN GET RIGHT NOW!
TAKE TADA WITH YOU. I'LL VOUCH FOR HIM.
KING!
I DON'T TRUST HIM!
YOU CAN TRUST HIM.
GUNGA!
I'M THE ELEV-ENTH.
EASY NOW!
NO VIOLENCE! I'M LIVING VACCINE, YOU KNOW
I DIDN'T MEAN ANY HARM LIKE I TOLD YOU, I'M AN EXPERIMENTAL CYBORG
EXPERI MENTAL!? YOU MEAN YOU CAME HERE AS PART OF AN EXPERIMENT!?
BUT WHAT ABOUT YOU!?
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO GOT THE IDEA IT WAS ME
SO YOU WERE THE ONE-
FOR CRYING OUT LOUD!
TADA! GUNGA! ALL OF YOU!
JUST SHUT UP ALREADY!!
WHO GIVES A DAMN ABOUT THE ELEVENTH!? WHAT GOOD DOES FINDING THE ELEVENTH DO FOR ANY OF US!?
THERE IS NO ELEVENTH! IT'S JUST LIKE TADA SAID IN THE BEGINNING!
SO STOP ACCUSING EACH OTHER
AND START ACTING LIKE A TEAM!
NOW LET'S GET THOSE DAMN EXPLOSIVES TOGETHER!
HE DOESN'T USE THE PRETTIEST LANGUAGE
BUT HE'S RIGHT
YEAH.
COME ON! THERE'S NO TIME!

*Everyone can hear what everyone says through the transceivers in their helmets

WHY THE HELL DID YOU FOLLOW ME, YOU IDIOT!?
DIDN'T WANT YOU TO BE LONE LY
THE SUN MUST HAVE CAUSED THE FAILURE.
THIS SUN IS GETTING TO BE A REAL PAIN IN THE ASS
SO YOU PLAN TO FALL INTO THE SUN WITH ME?
JUST LIKE THE STORY OF ICARUS, ISN'T IT?
ISN'T THERE SOMETHING WE CAN DO ABOUT THIS?


I'VE GOT IT! IF YOU GIVE ME A GOOD KICK, YOU CAN MAKE IT BACK TO THE SHIP
YOU KNOW, FROM THE MOMENTUM CAUSED BY THE IMPACT
GOOD IDEA!
FLIP
AH!
JUMP!
TADA!
TADA!
TADA!
TADA!
FAPP
PULL ON THIS. IT'S A GOOD OLD-FASHIONED LIFELINE.
YOU GO ON AHEAD. I'LL GO GET TADA.
YO.
HI
HEY! HERE THEY COME!
YAYYY!
SAVED FROM FALLING INTO THE SUN!
THANKS
IS EVERY-THING READY TO GO?
ALL SET
SORRY TO CAUSE A DELAY. LETS-
FAPP!

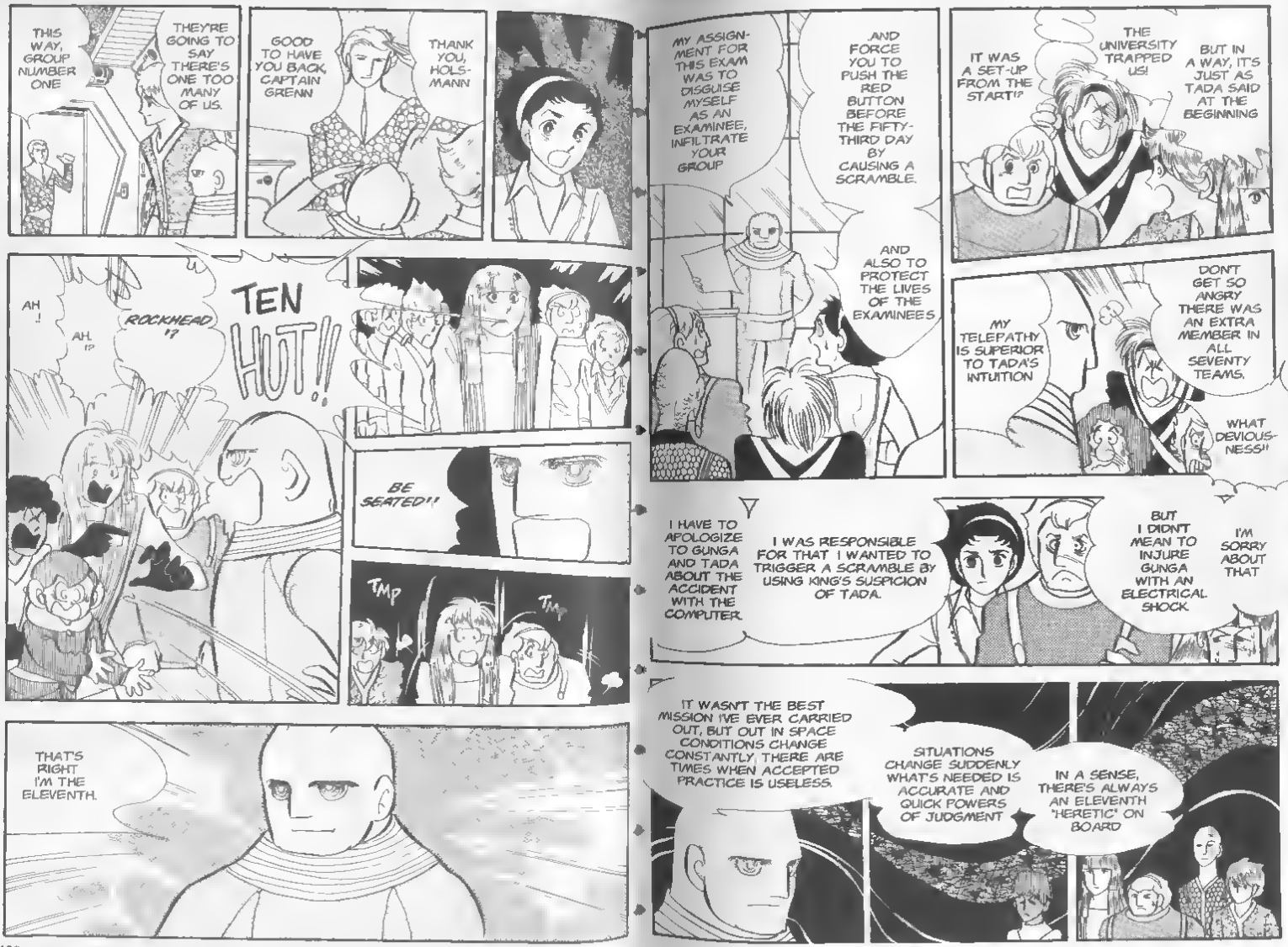
I TOLD YOU TO KICK ME TOWARD THE SUN
YOU EXPECT ME TO JUST DO EVERYTHING YOU SAY?
WE WERE BOTH IN THE SAME SITUATION! YOU JUST SAVED ME BECAUSE I'M A KID AND A MENEER AND SOFT, DIDN'T YOU!?
THIS IS NO TIME TO FIGHT!
The ship's temperature is 40.1 degrees celsius!
Crystals have begun to form in parts of the ship!
TMP TMP TMP
IN YOUR SEATS!
ONE MINUTE TO IGNITION!
I WONDER HOW BIG THE BLAST WILL BE
PROBABLY HALF THE RESIDENTIAL AREA OR ALL OF IT
FIFTY
THIRTY
TEN
EIGHT
SIX
FOUR
THREE
TWO
ONE
ZERO


WHUMP
RATTLE RATTLE
SPAK!

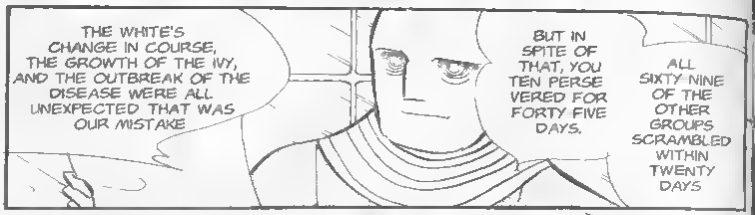
WAAH!
WE'RE MOVING AWAY!!
THAT WAS GREAT TIMING.
NEXT
SO THIS IS THE ACCINE?
YEAH AS LONG AS THERE ARE SOME CRYSTALS AROUND, WE'VE GOT TO PLAY IT SAFE
THE TEMPERATURE SHOULD START DROPPING WITHIN A DAY OR TWO
Five days later — Day forty-three—thirty-four degrees celsius
Day forty-four — Thirty degrees
THIS IS WHERE THE SHIP IS AT THE ONE MILLION SIX HUNDRED THOUSAND KILOMETER MARK
ON DAY FIFTY THREE WE SHOULD BE ABOUT HERE
EVERYTHING'S GOING WITHOUT A HITCH!
WE JUST HAVE TO WAIT TILL THE FIFTY-THIRD DAY
THE HOTHOUSE IS BURSTING WITH MELONS!
WOW!
KLANG!
AROL!?
I-IT'S NOTHING.
FLAP
KLANG
I SAID, IT'S NOTHING, AND I MEANT IT!
YOUR FINGERS!
LET ME SEE YOUR FINGERS!
NO!

THE VACCINE DIDN'T WORK ON FROL. HE'S GOT THE DISEASE
DAY FOURTY FIVE TWENTY FIVE DEGREES.
IT'S JUST AS NUUM PROPHE SIED
OPPOSED!
THERE'RE JUST EIGHT MORE DAYS LEFT! JUST EIGHT MORE DAYS!
YOU'LL DIE BEFORE THE EIGHT DAYS ARE UP, FROL
I'D RATHER DIE THAN BECOME A WOMAN
NO WAY, TADA! NO WAY!
WE'VE ALL WORKED TOGETHER TO COME THIS FAR! WE CAN'T JUST !
GUNGA! KING! AMA-ZON!
MAJOR ITY RULES NO EXCEP TIONS.
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO'S OPPOSED.
BEING A WOMAN CAN BE GREAT, FROL!
FROL!
WE CAN TRY AGAIN
YEAH, IT'LL JUST MEAN ANOTHER TWO AND A HALF YEARS BEFORE I CAN GO HOME
WELL, HERE GOES
BEEEEE
FROL.

THE NEIGHBORING LORD IS EIGHTEEN YEARS OLDER THAN ME. I'M SUPPOSED TO BE HAPPY ABOUT THAT!?
SO TELL HIM TO GO TO HELL!
DO YOU HAVE A FEVER?
NO
YOU CAN COME TO MY PLANET WE'RE MONOGAMOUS MARRY ME
HEY
HERE COMES OUR ESCORT SHIP
BUT IT'LL BE A LONG TIME UNTIL I TRANSFORM INTO A WOMAN
SO I'LL WAIT
I DON'T KNOW IF I'LL BE PRETTY OR NOT
YOU'LL BE BEAUTIFUL
WHAT'S WRONG?
I GUESS I DO HAVE A FEVER
SHHH
SHHH
TMP!
SHOOSH
TEST COMPLETE! GOOD WORK, GROUP NUMBER ONE.
AN INJURY?
HE'S SICK. DELL'S RED SPOT DISEASE
TAKE HIM TO THE GERM-FREE ROOM. CLASS "A" INFECTIOUS DISEASE ALERT.
NOTIFY MEDICAL TEAM TWO. WE'LL REPORT IN TWO HOURS.
YES, SIR.
FROU
SHHH
HE'LL BE FINE NOW.


THIS WAY, GROUP NUMBER ONE
THEY'RE GOING TO SAY THERE'S ONE TOO MANY OF US.
GOOD TO HAVE YOU BACK, CAPTAIN GRENN
THANK YOU, HOLSMANN
AH.!
AH.!?
ROCKHEAD!?
TEN
HUT!!
BE SEATED!!
TMP
TMP
THAT'S RIGHT I'M THE ELEVENTH.
MY ASSIGNMENT FOR THIS EXAM WAS TO DISGUISE MYSELF AS AN EXAMINEE, INFILTRATE YOUR GROUP
AND FORCE YOU TO PUSH THE RED BUTTON BEFORE THE FIFTY-THIRD DAY BY CAUSING A SCRAMBLE.
AND ALSO TO PROTECT THE LIVES OF THE EXAMINEES
IT WAS A SET-UP FROM THE START!?
THE UNIVERSITY TRAPPED US!
BUT IN A WAY, IT'S JUST AS TADA SAID AT THE BEGINNING
MY TELEPATHY IS SUPERIOR TO TADA'S INTUITION
DON'T GET SO ANGRY THERE WAS AN EXTRA MEMBER IN ALL SEVENTY TEAMS.
WHAT DEVIOUSNESS!!
I HAVE TO APOLOGIZE TO GUNGA AND TADA ABOUT THE ACCIDENT WITH THE COMPUTER.
I WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THAT I WANTED TO TRIGGER A SCRAMBLE BY USING KING'S SUSPICION OF TADA.
BUT I DIDN'T MEAN TO INJURE GUNGA WITH AN ELECTRICAL SHOCK.
I'M SORRY ABOUT THAT
IT WASN'T THE BEST MISSION I'VE EVER CARRIED OUT, BUT OUT IN SPACE CONDITIONS CHANGE CONSTANTLY, THERE ARE TIMES WHEN ACCEPTED PRACTICE IS USELESS.
SITUATIONS CHANGE SUDDENLY WHAT'S NEEDED IS ACCURATE AND QUICK POWERS OF JUDGMENT
IN A SENSE, THERE'S ALWAYS AN ELEVENTH "HERETIC" ON BOARD

EIGHTEEN GROUPS WERE TESTED ON SHIPS
OTHER TEAMS WERE SENT INTO TOWNS OR DROPPED OFF ON DESERTED PLANETS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THEIR VARIOUS APTITUDES
REGARDING THE EIGHTEEN TESTED ON SHIPS. GROUP NUMBER FIFTEEN PUSHED THE RED BUTTON THIRTY FIVE MINUTES AFTER THE TEST BEGAN.
NUMBER TEN COULDN'T FIND THE OFF SWITCH AND THEIR SHIP EXPLODED ALL TEN WERE EVACUATED UNHARMED

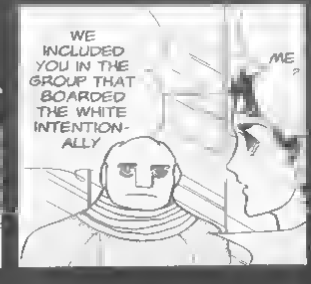

THE WHITE'S CHANGE IN COURSE, THE GROWTH OF THE IVY, AND THE OUTBREAK OF THE DISEASE WERE ALL UNEXPECTED THAT WAS OUR MISTAKE
BUT IN SPITE OF THAT, YOU TEN PERSEVERED FOR FORTY FIVE DAYS.
ALL SIXTY-NINE OF THE OTHER GROUPS SCRAMBLED WITHIN TWENTY DAYS

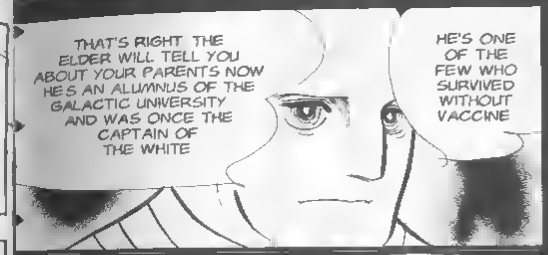
IN OTHER WORDS, DESPITE MY BEST EFFORTS
GRR
YOUR TEAM PASSED THE TEST WITH THE HIGHEST SCORE

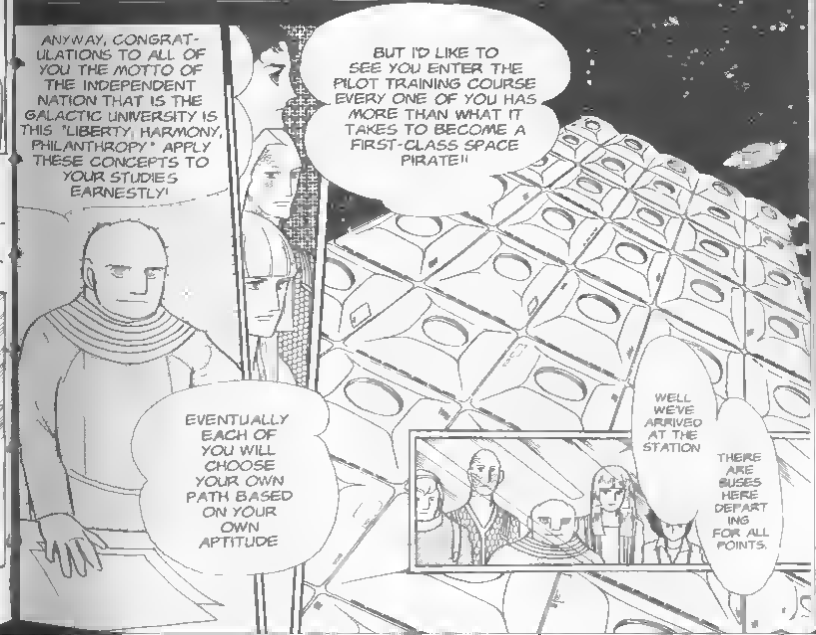
!?
P-PASSED
PASSED!?
YAAY!
PASSED!!
WE DON'T HAVE TO WAIT ANOTHER TWO AND A HALF YEARS!
WE DON'T HAVE TO TAKE THE TEST OVER AGAIN!
KING! NOW YOU CAN GO BACK TO YOUR COUNTRY WITH YOUR HEAD HELD HIGH!!
FROL CAN BECOME A MAN!

FRO

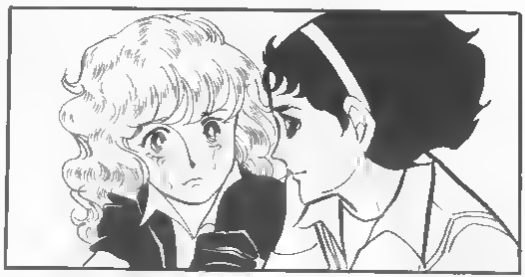
TADA


WE INCLUDED YOU IN THE GROUP THAT BOARDED THE WHITE INTENTIONALLY
ME?


THAT'S RIGHT THE ELDER WILL TELL YOU ABOUT YOUR PARENTS NOW HE'S AN ALUMNUS OF THE GALACTIC UNIVERSITY AND WAS ONCE THE CAPTAIN OF THE WHITE
HE'S ONE OF THE FEW WHO SURVIVED WITHOUT VACCINE


ANYWAY, CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF YOU THE MOTTO OF THE INDEPENDENT NATION THAT IS THE GALACTIC UNIVERSITY IS THIS "LIBERTY, HARMONY, PHILANTHROPY." APPLY THESE CONCEPTS TO YOUR STUDIES EARNESTLY!
BUT I'D LIKE TO SEE YOU ENTER THE PILOT TRAINING COURSE EVERY ONE OF YOU HAS MORE THAN WHAT IT TAKES TO BECOME A FIRST-CLASS SPACE PIRATE!!
EVENTUALLY EACH OF YOU WILL CHOOSE YOUR OWN PATH BASED ON YOUR OWN APTITUDE
WELL WE'VE ARRIVED AT THE STATION
THERE ARE BUSES HERE DEPARTING FOR ALL POINTS.

THE PATIENT IS DOING FINE
THE RED SPOTS HAVE DRIED UP AND HIS FEVER IS DOWN
HEY THERE
TADA.
THE OTHERS ARE AT THE STATION IM HERE ON THEIR BEHALF
I STILL CANT BELIEVE IT
WE PASSED!
I CANT WAIT TO TELL MY SISTERS AND MY MOTHER!
I'M HAPPY FOR YOU
BUT A LITTLE DISAP-POINTED, TOO WELL, MAYBE A LOT
YOU KNOW
. . I DONT MIND BECOMING A WOMAN IF YOU WANT ME TO
HM!?
WHICH COURSE ARE YOU GOING TO TAKE?
I'M THINKING OF TAKING THE PILOT COURSE
THEN I WILL, TOO!
SEE YOU LATER.
SEE YOU IN SCHOOL!
BECOME A GOOD LORD, KING
I'M SORRY ABOUT EVERYTHING TADA
IT'S BEEN VERY EDUCA TIONAL.
TO THE FUTURE!
THE END



THE CHANGELING

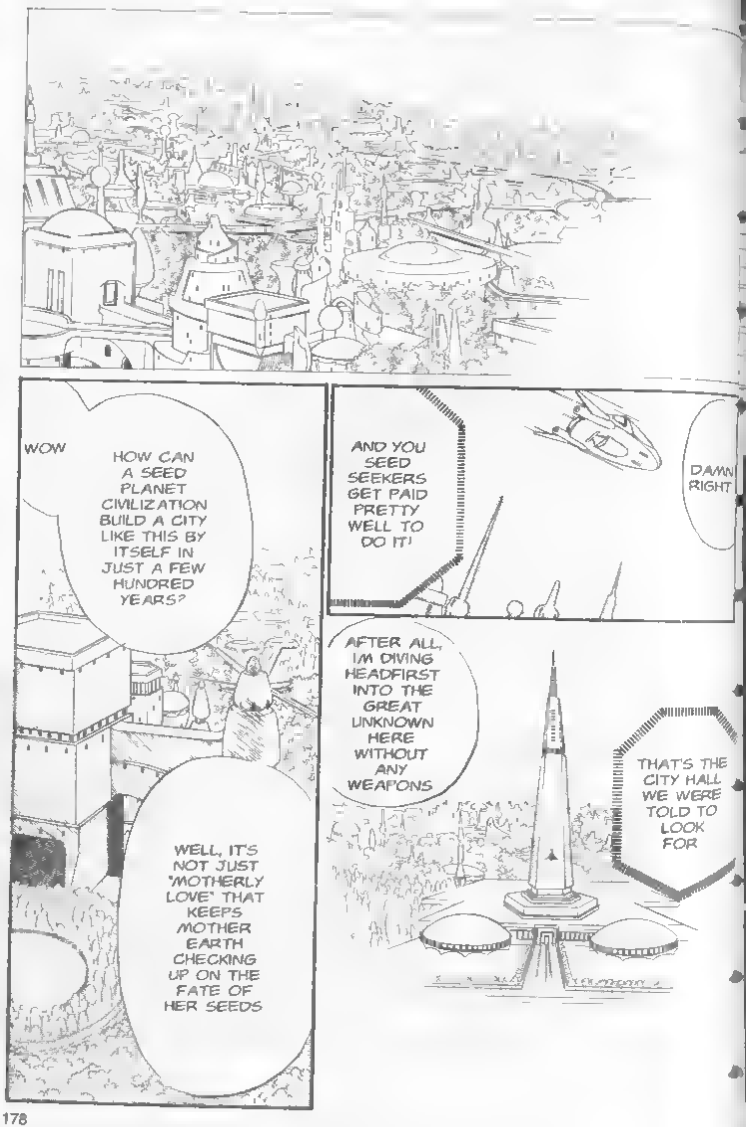
STORY & ART BY
SHIO SATO

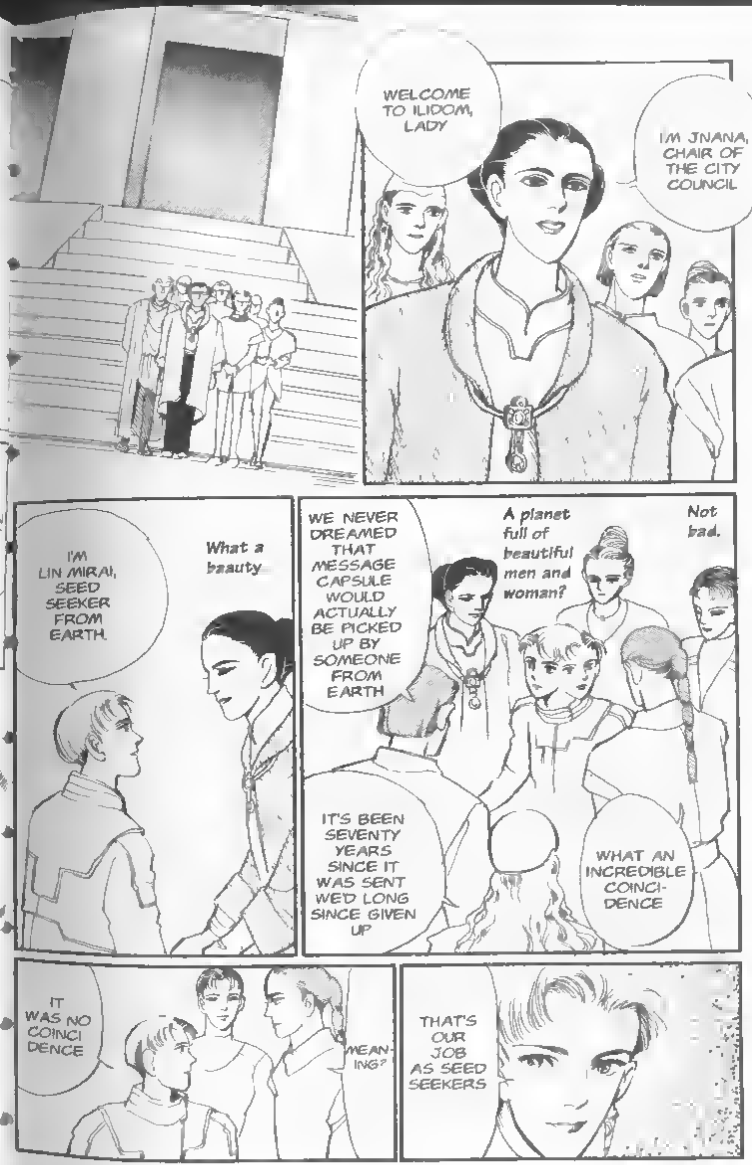
The message capsule recovered in space sector 1770-575-ZQ-3 has been identified as a model used in the early "Seed Age," though it is estimated to have been launched some seventy to eighty years ago

The place of origin is the planet Ilidom

The name of the sender is Sephiloth Daren.

OF COURSE NOT! I'M JUST AMAZED THAT WE'VE ARRIVED AT OUR DESTINATION IN JUST ONE MONTH.
AS ALWAYS, MIZZ, YOU'RE A GENIUS.
NO DOUBT ABOUT THAT
RIGHT THAT SNOBBISH 'CULTURAL RANKING' BUSINESS SO WHERE DOES ILIDOM FALL?
VIJ-NANA MAYA KOSHA LEVEL*
VIJNANA ?
ISN'T THAT THE 'CONSCIOUSNESS' RANK, SECOND FROM THE TOP? WOW! USUALLY IT'S 'MATERIAL' RANK OR, AT BEST, 'LIBIDO' RANK
NOW COMES THE BIG MOMENT
NOW WE FIND OUT
WHAT KIND OF FLOWER OUR 'SEED' HAS BLOSSOMED INTO, AND WHAT KIND OF FRUIT IT HAS BORNE
THE CONTENT OF THE BROAD-CASTS IS EXTREMELY LOGICAL AND INTELLECTUAL
NO LOWBROW ENTERTAIN MENT OR BINGO GAMES!
THANKS, MIZZ NOW IT'S MY JOB TO CONFIRM THAT
IS THE SHUTTLE READY?
ACCORDING TO THE MESSAGE, ILIDOM'S ARISTO CRACY WAS IN ITS LAST DAYS, AND A REVOLUTION WAS ABOUT TO TAKE PLACE
DEPENDING ON THE OUTCOME, THE WHOLE PLANET MAY HAVE BEEN WIPED OUT!
NOPE FOR THE PAST THREE HOURS I'VE BEEN PICKING UP BROADCAST SIGNALS
REALLY? LET ME HEAR THEM!
I'M GETTING EVERY SIGNAL FROM THIS SIDE OF THE PLANET SIMULTANEOUSLY TO YOU IT WOULD JUST BE NOISE I'LL JUST TELL YOU THE RESULTS.
RIGHT DOWN TO THE SUMMON CODE
DON'T WORRY IT'S THE CITY COUNCIL. GOOD LUCK, LIN!
IT'S NOT ANOTHER BROAD CASTING STATION, IS IT?
IT BETTER NOT BE THAT ALWAYS MAKES THINGS MESSY
*Vijnana maya kosha Sanskrit literally meaning "the sheath that contains objective consciousness" The five "sheaths,"from lowest to highest, are ANNA (food/material), PRANA (life breath/ libido), MANO (mind) VIJNANA (objective consciousness), and ANANDA (bliss)


WOW
HOW CAN A SEED PLANET CIVILIZATION BUILD A CITY LIKE THIS BY ITSELF IN JUST A FEW HUNDRED YEARS?
WELL, IT'S NOT JUST 'MOTHERLY LOVE' THAT KEEPS MOTHER EARTH CHECKING UP ON THE FATE OF HER SEEDS
AND YOU SEED SEEKERS GET PAID PRETTY WELL TO DO IT!
DAMN RIGHT
AFTER ALL, I'M DIVING HEADFIRST INTO THE GREAT UNKNOWN HERE WITHOUT ANY WEAPONS
THAT'S THE CITY HALL WE WERE TOLD TO LOOK FOR


WELCOME TO ILIDOM, LADY
I'M JNANA, CHAIR OF THE CITY COUNCIL
I'M LIN MIRAI, SEED SEEKER FROM EARTH.
What a beauty
WE NEVER DREAMED THAT MESSAGE CAPSULE WOULD ACTUALLY BE PICKED UP BY SOMEONE FROM EARTH
A planet full of beautiful men and woman?
Not bad.
IT'S BEEN SEVENTY YEARS SINCE IT WAS SENT WE'D LONG SINCE GIVEN UP
WHAT AN INCREDIBLE COINCI-DENCE
IT WAS NO COINCI DENCE
MEAN-ING?
THAT'S OUR JOB AS SEED SEEKERS

MOTHER EARTH IS EXTREMELY CONCERNED ABOUT THE FATE OF ITS SEEDS
IF NECESSARY WE'RE PREPARED TO PROVIDE ANY KIND OF HELP AT ALL
A painfully obvious exaggeration, I must admit - - but. . .
SUCH SUBLIME GENEROSITY
INDEED
Are they serious?
I can't detect even a hint of irony in their voices
but they may just be highly polished politicians
BUT IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE ILIDOM NEEDS ANYTHING, LET ALONE HELP FROM US!
THERE ISN'T A MEGALOPOLIS AS PROSPEROUS, BEAUTIFUL, AND ORDERLY AS THIS ONE TO BE FOUND ANYWHERE
THANK YOU.
NONE OF THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE HAD THE REVOLUTION NOT SUCCEEDED
THE REVOLUTION MENTIONED IN THE MESSAGE?

YES, WE WERE THE UNDER CLASS FOR A VERY LONG TIME, BUT NOW WE ARE ORDINARY CITIZENS
THANK YOU, EPSILON
YOU'RE WELCOME
WHAT BECAME OF THE NOBILITY?
SADLY, NOT A SINGLE MEMBER OF THE NOBLE RACE--
THE NOBILITY, THAT IS- SURVIVES TODAY
YOU PURGED THEM?
WOMEN AND CHILDREN, TOO?
THEY MAY HAVE BEEN DECADENT, BUT SURELY--
CERTAINLY NOT!
YOU MISUNDERSTAND US, LADY
IT'S TRUE THAT SEVENTEEN DIED IN THE UPRISING
BUT AFTER THE REVOLUTION, THEY WERE ALL CARED FOR IN RESTRICTED FACILITIES
THEY WERE KEPT UNDER HOUSE ARREST, BUT THEY LIVED IN THE PALACES! THEY HAD ALWAYS USED THEY WERE ENORMOUS
FOR FIFTY YEARS, WE SAW TO THEIR EVERY NEED

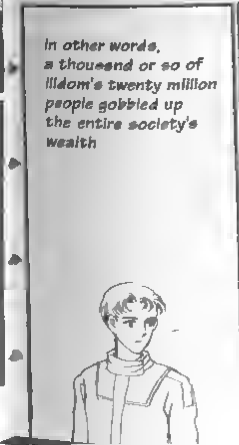
WE CANNOT FATHOM WHY THEY LOST THEIR WILL TO LIVE AND DIED OFF
PERHAPS YOU CAN EXPLAIN IT, LADY
PLEASE CALL ME LIN IF NOT THEN "SEEKER."
COUNCIL CHAIR JNANA

THE EARTH WILL NOT INTERFERE IN YOUR INTERNAL AFFAIRS WHOEVER DIES OR BECOMES EXTINCT IN YOUR REVOLUTION IS YOUR BUSINESS

WE JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT WE WERE FAIR TO THEM
You want ME to know, that you were FAIR?
Come to think of it, they said the same thing in the message
"We vow to Mother Earth that this revolution will be FAIR."
I don't really see the point in being fair to a corrupt ruling class

THIS IS THE EQUINOX PALACE
BEFORE AND AFTER THE REVOLUTION, THIS WAS THE MOST LUXURIOUS OF THE NOBLE RACES MANSIONS
NOW, IT'S SOMETHING OF A MUSEUM
HOW MANY OF THE NOBLE RACE LIVED HERE?

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE REVOLUTION, FOUR HUNDRED AND SEVEN
FOR SEVERAL CENTURIES BEFORE THAT, THE POPULATION OF THE NOBLE RACE WAS HARDLY MORE THAN A THOUSAND
THAT'S ALL?
THAT WAS MORE THAN ENOUGH.
IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR THEM, OUR CIVILIZATION WOULD HAVE ATTAINED ITS CURRENT LEVEL THREE HUNDRED YEARS AGO


In other words, a thousand or so of Iildom's twenty million people gobbled up the entire society's wealth

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL GOWN!
THE FABRIC IS MADE OF CRYSTAL FIBER

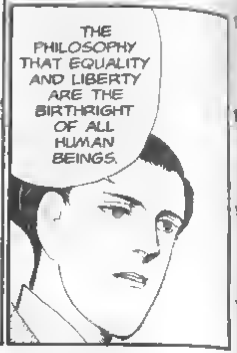
IT'S INCREDIBLY EXPENSIVE AND INCREDIBLY IMPRACTICAL, BUT THE NOBLE RACE LOVED SUCH GLITTERY THINGS
I LIKE IT, TOO IT'S BEAUTIFUL!

TRY IT ON IF YOU LIKE IT, YOU CAN HAVE IT
OH, I COULDN'T
IT'S PART OF YOUR EXHIBIT
THERE ARE MANY MORE BESIDES, THEY'RE TOO SMALL FOR US TO WEAR OURSELVES
IT LOOKS LOVELY ON YOU
Really?
AH!
Why ? Where did they all come from so suddenly?
What's going on here?
WHY ARE YOU RUNNING AWAY? WE'RE ALL JUST HAPPY TO
ARE YOU KIDDING? I'M NOT SOME SIDESHOW ATTRACTION
I MAY SEEM SMALL TO YOU, BUT I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW, I'M AVERAGE SIZE
WE KNOW THAT IT'S ONLY NATURAL THAT A WOMAN OF THE NOBLE RACE BE SMALL
A WOMAN OF THE WHAT?

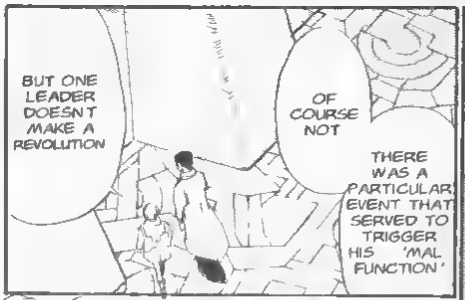
ME, A MEMBER OF THE NOBLE RACE!?
THEN WHAT DOES THAT MAKE YOU?
OF COURSE 'NOBLE RACE' REFERS TO HOMO SAPIENS, THE NATIVE RACE OF EARTH.
I SUPPOSE WE ARE YOUR COUSINS.
YOU KNOW THAT ILIDOM IS A PLANET POOR IN NATURAL RESOURCES, DON'T YOU?
WE HAD TO REBUILD OUR BODIES TO MORE EFFECTIVELY ADAPT TO THIS ENVIRONMENT
WE HAVE ALL BUT OVERCOME DISEASE AND AGING THROUGH CONTINUAL GENETIC ENGINEERING
IT IS NOW IMPOSSIBLE FOR US TO CROSS-BREED WITH THE ORIGINAL NOBLE SPECIES HOMO SAPIENS
WHAT!?

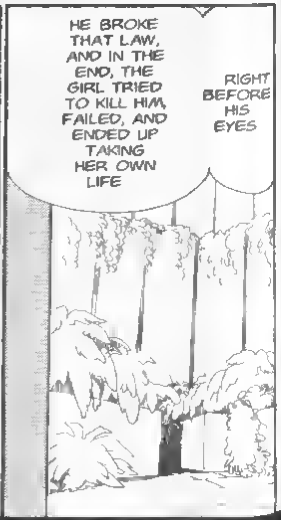
I'VE NEVER HEARD OF SUCH A THING A NEW SPECIES SPLITTING OFF IN A MATTER OF CENTURIES!?
THE PACE WAS NOT A NATURAL ONE THE IMPROVE MENTS WERE ENTIRELY ARTIFICIAL
This is unbelievable. It's been less than a thousand years since the Seed Age.
WHEN DID YOUR IMMIGRA-TION SHIP ARRIVE ON ILIDOM?
THAT
WE DO NOT KNOW
WHY!?
OUR HISTORY GOES BACK ONLY FIVE HUNDRED YEARS.
RECORDS OF EARLIER TIMES WERE IN THE HANDS OF THE NOBLE RACE
THE COMPUTER THAT SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN USED TO KEEP THOSE RECORDS WAS DAMAGED ABANDONED AND FORGOTTEN WHEN IT WAS REDISCOVERED, IT WAS BARELY FUNCTIONING
THE BASEMENT OF THIS PALACE IS NOW A HISTORY LIBRARY THE COMPUTER THAT WAS REDISCOVERED, 'SUCHNESS,' IS STILL LIVING THERE
MAY I HELP YOU, MASTER ?
HELLO, EXXY
YOUR ROBOTS ARE SO CUTE SO SMALL AND CLEVER.
THIS IS A ROBOT ONIC
THERE ARE ABOUT FORTY OF THEM IN THE LIBRARY THESE ARE THE HANDS AND LEGS OF SUCHNESS
THE MAL FUNCTIONING COMPUTER IS THEIR BOSS?
ONLY A SMALL PART OF IT IS OUT OF ORDER THE REST IS SIMPLY MEMORY BANKS AND A REFERENCE SYSTEM.
IT DOESN'T INTERFERE WITH THEIR WORK
TO TELL THE TRUTH, THE COMPUTER IS NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO IS 'OUT OF ORDER'
EXXY, WHERE IS SEPHILOTH NOW?
HE IS IN QUAD-RANT 0 0
WHERE HE ALWAYS IS THANK YOU
SEPHI LOTH?

SEPHILOTH DAREN, THE ONE WHO SENT THAT MESSAGE ?
THAT'S RIGHT HE IS THE ONE WHO REDIS COVERED SUCHNESS
AND DEVELOPED THE PHILOSOPHY BEHIND THE REVOLUTION BASED ON WHAT HE FOUND IN ITS MEMORY BANKS

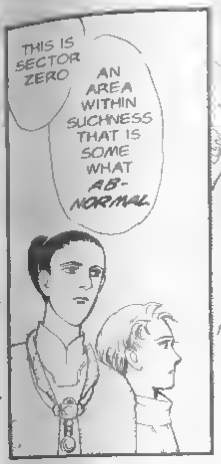

THE PHILOSOPHY THAT EQUALITY AND LIBERTY ARE THE BIRTHRIGHT OF ALL HUMAN BEINGS.

WHY IS HE 'OUT OF ORDER'?
IN THE END
THE REVOLU TION WIPED OUT THE NOBLE RACE
THAT IS A DEEP REGRET THAT CONTINUES TO PAIN US ALL.
IT WAS EVEN MORE PAINFUL FOR HIM AS OUR LEADER.

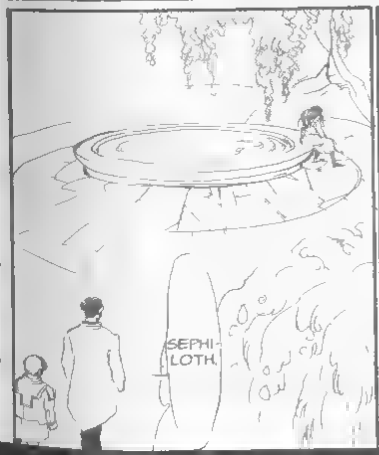

BUT ONE LEADER DOESN'T MAKE A REVOLUTION
OF COURSE NOT
THERE WAS A PARTICULAR EVENT THAT SERVED TO TRIGGER HIS 'MAL FUNCTION'


HE BROKE THAT LAW, AND IN THE END, THE GIRL TRIED TO KILL HIM, FAILED, AND ENDED UP TAKING HER OWN LIFE
RIGHT BEFORE HIS EYES

HE RAISED A GIRL
A GIRL OF THE NOBLE RACE
IT WAS AGAINST OUR LAW TO KEEP A CHILD OF THE NOBLE RACE


THIS IS SECTOR ZERO
AN AREA WITHIN SUCHNESS THAT IS SOME WHAT AB-NORMAL

THIS SCENERY
A HOLO GRAM
NOTHING BUT AN ILLUSION


SEPHI-LOTH

SEPHILOTH, THE MESSAGE YOU SENT SEVENTY YEARS AGO WAS PICKED UP
LOOK, SEPHI LOTH! AN EARTH-LING!
SEED SEEKER LADY MIRAI
I AM NOT A LADY!
TETHYS

SEPHI LOTH!
THIS IS LIN MIRAI AN EARTHLING
EARTH
DO YOU REMEMBER THE MESSAGE CAPSULE? IT DRIFTED IN SPACE FOR SEVENTY YEARS!
IT WAS A VERY OLD MODEL THAT ISN'T USED ANYMORE BECAUSE IT WASN'T PRECISE ENOUGH WHEN ENTERING SUBSPACE
MAR-VELOUS.
SHE'S FULLY MATURED
HOW WERE YOU ABLE TO GROW LIKE THIS?
"LIKE THIS"?

ARE THERE MANY ON EARTH
LIKE YOURSELF?
LIKE ME?
MEANING?
WITH DEVELOPED INTELLECTUAL FACULTIES
WELL, I CAN'T SAY WE ALL HAVE "DEVELOPED INTELLECTUAL FACULTIES," BUT I SUPPOSE MOST OF US DO
HOW MANY?
EIGHT HUNDRED MILLION ON EARTH.
FIVE BILLION IN THE SOLAR SYSTEM. FIFTY BILLION ELSEWHERE
NOT THAT I EVER COUNTED THEM ALL OR ANYTHING
FIFTY BILLION?
SEPHILOTH!
WE HAVE YOU TO THANK, SEEKER MIRAI FOR THE PAST TWENTY YEARS SEPHILOTH HAS SPOKEN TO NO ONE
YOU'VE REGAINED YOUR SENSES!
JNANA

I LOST TOUCH WITH REALITY
WELL, THANK GOODNESS YOU'VE REGAINED IT
I HAVE TO REPORT THIS TO THE PEOPLE! THEY'LL BE THRILLED!
I KNOW WE'LL HAVE A CELEBRATION. AND THE SEEKER SHALL BE OUR GUEST OF HONOR!
YOU'RE THE SEPHILOTH WHO SENT THE MESSAGE CAPSULE?
THAT'S RIGHT
HOW OLD ARE YOU?
NINETY-THREE
Makes sense. To have been the leader of the revolution seventy years ago, he would have to be at least that old
HMM
?

YOU LOOK LIKE A WET BEHIND THE EARS KID TO ME
I SUPPOSE I AM LACKING A BIT IN DIGNITY
I'VE NEGLECTED MY SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR A VERY LONG TIME
My heart is out of control.
Is that supposed to be an answer to my comment?
I DON'T MIND NO HARM DONE
THE HARM IS TO SUCHNESS.
SHE MUST BE MADE TO REALIZE THAT ALL FEMALES OF THE NOBLE RACE ARE NOT TETHYS.
YOU MISTOOK ME FOR HER YOURSELF A MINUTE AGO
MY APOLOGIES
I WAS CONFUSED, JUST AS SUCHNESS IS.
DO I LOOK LIKE HER?
I DON'T KNOW.
MAYBE YOU DO, BUT MAYBE IT'S JUST BECAUSE YOU ARE OF THE NOBLE RACE
AH.
STOP IT, SUCHNESS!
SEPHILOTH
SHE'S NOT TETHYS!
WHAT A PRETTY FLOWER
LOOK. THE PETALS OPEN WHEN I EXTEND MY HAND
I HEAR YOU BROKE THE LAW AND RAISED THAT GIRL.
I WAS NOT ALONE THROUGHOUT HISTORY THERE WERE SEVERAL ATTEMPTS TO DO THE SAME THING
MEMBERS OF THE NOBLE RACE ARE VERY INTELLIGENT WHEN THEY ARE CHILDREN THEY REMEMBER ANYTHING THEY ARE TAUGHT, AND THEIR TEMPERAMENT IS GENTLE
ONE CAN'T HELP FEELING THAT IF THEY ARE PROPERLY EDUCATED AND RAISED, THEY WILL GROW UP TO BE FINE ADULTS WITH THE POWER TO REASON AND THINK!

BUT NOT ONE SUCH ATTEMPT HAS EVER SUCCEEDED
THE STORM OF SEXUAL INSTINCTS THAT BEGINS WITH COURTSHIP IN ADOLESCENCE
INEVITABLY SNATCHES THEM AWAY FROM US, UTTERLY SWEEPING AWAY THE FRUITS OF OUR EFFORTS
THAT STORM WA ALWAYS BEYOND OUR ABILITY TO COMPRE HEND
BUT YOU PEOPLE HAVE SEX TOO, DON'T YOU?
OF COURSE
BUT THERE IS NO BRIDGE BETWEEN OUR TWO SPECIES
IS THE PRE SERVATION OF THE SPECIES THE ONLY REASON TO HAVE SEX?
I BELIEVE IT WAS THE ORIGINAL PURPOSE, WAS IT NOT?
ALL RIGHT
NEVER MIND!

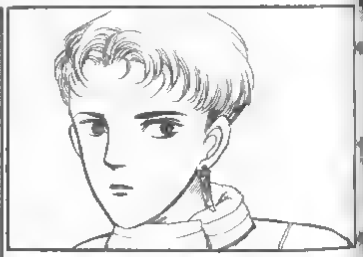
THE ADULT NOBLES KNOW FROM EXPERIENCE THAT WE ARE NOT LIKE THAT, AND DON'T TRY TO BECOME ROMANTICALLY INVOLVED WITH US
BUT THE CHILDREN DON'T UNDER- STAND THAT
YOU REJECTED THE GIRL?
I COULD NEVER HAVE REJECTED HER
SO YOU ACCEPTED HER.
OF COURSE
I COULDN'T KEEP A CHILD OF THE NOBLE RACE IF I WASN'T PREPARED FOR THAT
WITHOUT EXCEPTION, THEY MAKE ADVANCES ON THE CAREGIVER OF THE OPPOSITE SEX TO WHOM THEY ARE CLOSEST
TETHYS WAS THE LAST SURVIVING MEMBER OF HER GENERATION OF THE NOBLE RACE THE OTHERS WERE ALL ELDERLY
IT WASN'T AS IF KEEPING TETHYS AT MY SIDE WOULD INTERFERE WITH THEIR PROPAGATION
I SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT ONLY OF TETHYS
SHE SHONE LIKE A LITTLE SUN.
SHE WAS MY MOST PRECIOUS TREASURE

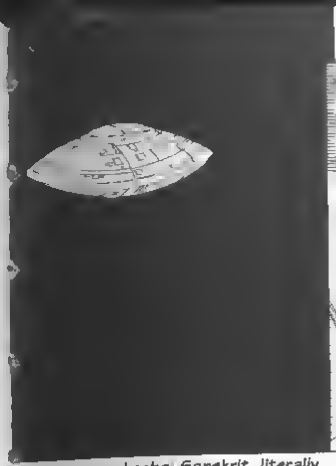
THE PASSION AND DESIRE SHE DEMANDED ARE NOWHERE TO BE FOUND IN ME
BUT MY LOVE WAS IN VAIN
One day, she came running into the library, looking for me.
SEPHI-LOTH!
COMMIT SUICIDE WITH ME!
DIE!
LIKE THIS!
TETH
TETHYS!
TETHYS!!
She was always becoming hysterical.
She beat my chest with the flowering branch she was holding, but I didn't make much of it.
WE'LL DIE TOGETHER WON'T THAT BE WONDERFUL?
DIE, SEPHILOTH! DIE!
YOU SHOULD BE HAPPY TO DIE FOR ME

The illusions that Suchness had memorized for Tethys' entertainment.

whirled by, one after the other.

but none of them had the power to stop her in midair.





THERE'S NO DISEASE, NO BARBARITY SO THERE'S NO INEQUALITY
IF YOU'LL PARDON THE CLICHE, IT'S UTOPIA MAYBE WE SHOULD UPGRADE THE CULTURAL RANK TO ANANDA MAYA KOSHA.*
LET'S NOT RUSH INTO ANYTHING, MIZZ.

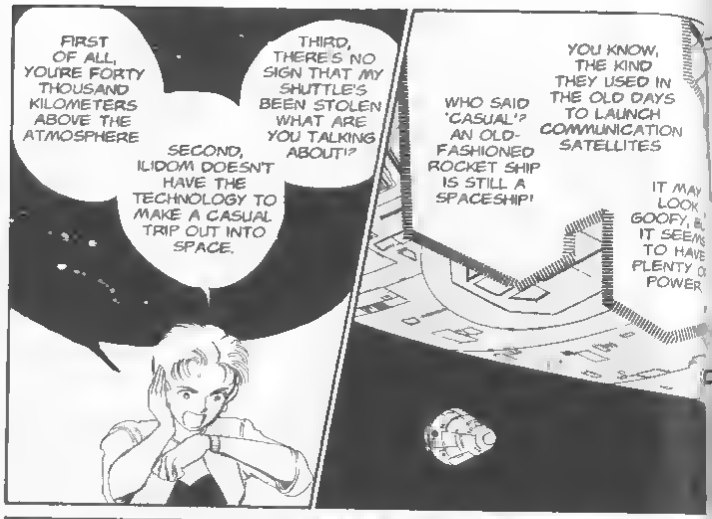
*Ananda maya kosha| Sanskrit, literally meaning "the sheath that contains bliss." The five "sheaths," from lowest to highest, are: ANNA (food/material), PRANA (life breath/libido), MANO (mind), VINANA (objective conciousness), and ANANDA (bliss).

THEY'RE THE ONES WHO LET THOSE MORONS RULE FOR CENTURIES
THEY WERE THE ONES WHO ACTUALLY GOVERNED THE SOCIETY IN THE FIRST PLACE THE NOBLE RACE WAS IGNORANT AND POWERLESS!
IN OTHER WORDS
WE DON'T KNOW WHY THEY REVOLTED SEVENTY YEARS AGO BUT DIDN'T REVOLT IN THE CENTURIES BEFORE THEN!

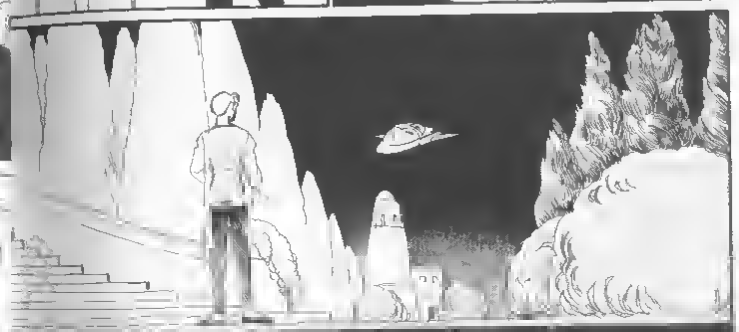
PROBABLY BECAUSE THEY WORSHIPPED THE NOBLE RACE
ALL THEY SAY IS THAT THERE WAS A CASTE SYSTEM.
SO THEY REVOLTED IN THE NAME OF 'LIBERTY AND EQUALITY'
I DON'T THINK THIS IS ANANDA. I THINK THIS MAY BE SOMETHING THAT DOESN'T FIT OUR SYSTEM OF CLASSIFICATION AT ALL
WHY!?
THEY'RE NOT ONLY THE MOST PEACEFUL PEOPLE WE'VE EVER ENCOUNTERED, THEY'RE SINCERE TO BOOT!
BUT THEY ALLOWED THE NOBLE RACE TO DIE OUT
RIGHT AND THEY DISCOVERED THOSE CONCEPTS IN THE MEMORY BANKS OF SOME DINOSAUR OF A COMPUTER, RIGHT?
SO THEY DIDN'T HAVE THOSE VALUES BEFORE THAT!?
THEY MAY HAVE, BUT THIS NEW PHILOSOPHY PROVIDED THE MORAL AUTHORITY THEY NEEDED TO MAKE THE DECISION TO REVOLT
YES, BUT THAT~
THE NOBLE RACE MAY HAVE DONE MORE HARM THAN GOOD
BUT THEY DIDN'T REPRESENT A THREAT TO THE SURVIVAL OF THE CITIZENS
THE CITIZENS MADE THEIR CHOICE ON IDEOLOGICAL GROUNDS
THE FITTEST SURVIVED, AS IT WERE
So then the sadness they felt was genuine! They mourned the people they had served respectfully for so long
MIZZ.
WHAT?
THAT SEEMS RIGHT TO ME
BUT IT'S NOT A MATTER OF RIGHT AND WRONG!
I MEAN, TO THEM
WE ARE THE NOBLE RACE

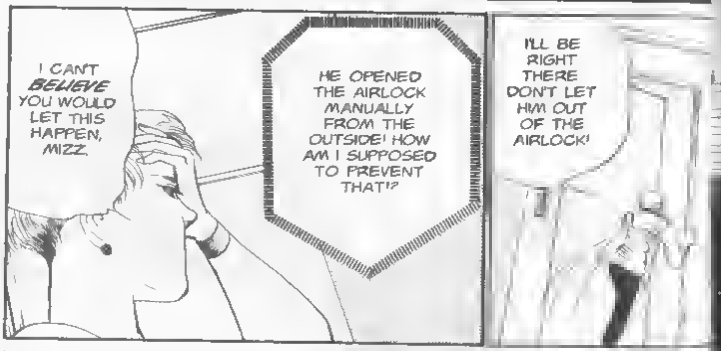
DANGER-OUS? THE SEEKER?
SHE ISN'T DEGRADED AND CORRUPT THE WAY ILIDOM'S NOBLE RACE WAS
BUT SHE IS OF THE NOBLE RACE
OTHERS OF HER KIND WILL COME
AND WHEN THEY DO, WE WILL BECOME UNDERCLASS CITIZENS ONCE AGAIN
ILIDOM SEEMS TO BE A KIND OF UTOPIA.
THIS SCRAWNY, RESOURCE POOR PLANET A UTOPIA?
THIS WOULD RENDER MEANINGLESS THE PAINFUL DECISION WE MADE TO STAND BY SILENTLY AS THE NOBLE RACE DIED OUT
BUT WHAT CAN WE DO?
YES BECAUSE IN SPITE OF THAT, YOU HAVE NO POVERTY AND NO INEQUALITY
YOU EXAGGERATE
ILIDOM IS A REMOTE PLANET I DON'T THINK THERE WOULD BE MUCH TRAFFIC IN EITHER PEOPLE OR GOODS
A PLANETARY AMBASSADOR MIGHT COME
BUT MOST OF YOUR CONTACT WOULD BE LIMITED TO TRADE WITH COM-POUND SHIPS.
"COM-POUND SHIPS"?
YOU KNOW THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO
BUT THERE IS!
AND I'LL DO IT!
I SUPPOSE IF WE MADE AN ALLIANCE WITH EARTH
WE CAN EXPECT A FLOOD OF VISITORS
NO

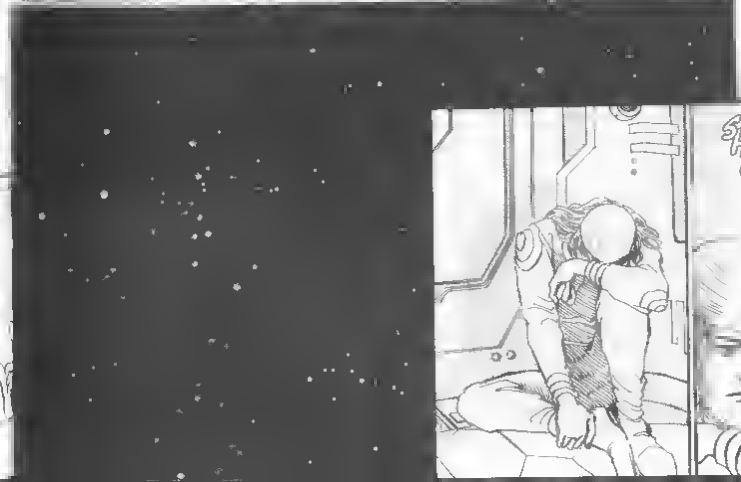
ENORMOUS SHIPS THAT ARE INDEPENDENT, AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITIES
THEY MOVE ONLY IN NORMAL SPACE, SO ONE WOULD ONLY STOP BY ONCE EVERY HUNDRED YEARS OR SO
I SEE
WHAT ABOUT INFORMATION?
IF I CAN, I'LL BE HAPPY TO HELP YOU WITH ANYTHING YOU NEED
Wink
!?
W WOULD YOU EXCUSE ME A MOMENT?
TMP
TRANSMISSIONS ARE SENT THROUGH SUBSPACE, AND ARE MORE OR LESS INSTANTANEOUS
ALSO, EARTH SENDS REGULAR TRANSMISSIONS TO ITS ALLIED PLANETS, FREE OF CHARGE
I SEE
...
MIZZ, YOU LITTLE SNOB
WHY DO YOU HAVE TO USE A WINK TO ALERT ME IN AN EMERGENCY?
WHERE IS SEPHILOTH?
HE'S NOT HERE TODAY, AND I DIDN'T SEE HIM YESTERDAY, EITHER
HE'S NOT A MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL
HE'S FREE TO COME AND GO AS HE PLEASES
I REALIZE THAT, BUT--
IS THERE SOMETHING ONLY SEPHILOTH CAN HELP YOU WITH?
BIPM
MIZZ! A WINK IS EVEN WORSE THAN THE TOOTHACHE YOU USED LAST TIME! SOMEONE COULD GET THE WRONG IDEA!
THERE'S SOMEONE OUTSIDE THE SHIP
WHAT DID YOU SAY?

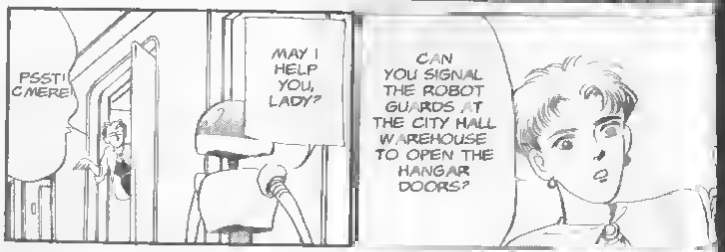

FIRST OF ALL, YOU'RE FORTY THOUSAND KILOMETERS ABOVE THE ATMOSPHERE
SECOND, ILIDOM DOESN'T HAVE THE TECHNOLOGY TO MAKE A CASUAL TRIP OUT INTO SPACE.
THIRD, THERE'S NO SIGN THAT MY SHUTTLE'S BEEN STOLEN WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT!?
WHO SAID 'CASUAL'? AN OLD-FASHIONED ROCKET SHIP IS STILL A SPACESHIP!
YOU KNOW, THE KIND THEY USED IN THE OLD DAYS TO LAUNCH COMMUNICATION SATELLITES
IT MAY LOOK GOOFY, B IT SEEMS TO HAVE PLENTY O POWER

WHICH DOORS? THERE ARE A LOT OF DOORS
EH!
UMM
UMM
AW, HELL OPEN THEM ALL!
OKAY




I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU WOULD LET THIS HAPPEN, MIZZ.
HE OPENED THE AIRLOCK MANUALLY FROM THE OUTSIDE! HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO PREVENT THAT!?
I'LL BE RIGHT THERE DON'T LET HIM OUT OF THE AIRLOCK!




PSST! C'MERE!
MAY I HELP YOU, LADY?
CAN YOU SIGNAL THE ROBOT GUARDS AT THE CITY HALL WAREHOUSE TO OPEN THE HANGAR DOORS?

SHAA!

LIN MIRAI!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
I THINK THAT'S MY QUESTION! I DON'T REMEMBER INVITING YOU HERE
...
ANSWER ME, SEPHILOTH!
IT SEEMS HE WAS TRYING TO BLOW ME UP
WHAT!?
IS THAT TRUE!?
WAS THAT MIZZS VOICE!? WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY 'ME'!?
I AM MIZZ, THE 'MIND' OF THE MINDSHIP 'MIS ANTHROPE'
I I THOUGHT YOU WERE A HUMAN BEING
THAT'S JUST WHAT I WANTED YOU TO THINK. YOU EXPECT ME TO STAND BY QUIETLY AND LET YOU BLOW ME UP!?
...
WELL. THIS BETTER BE GOOD, SEPHILOTH
WE CAN'T ALLOW YOUR REPORT TO REACH EARTH
ILIDOM DOES NOT WISH TO HAVE ANY INTERCOURSE WITH EARTH.
THEN DON'T MAKE AN ALLIANCE WITH US
BUT YOUR PEOPLE WILL FIND OUT ABOUT ILIDOM.
SOONER OR LATER, SOMEONE WILL COME
WHEN THEY DO, WE WILL BE POWERLESS TO REFUSE THEM.

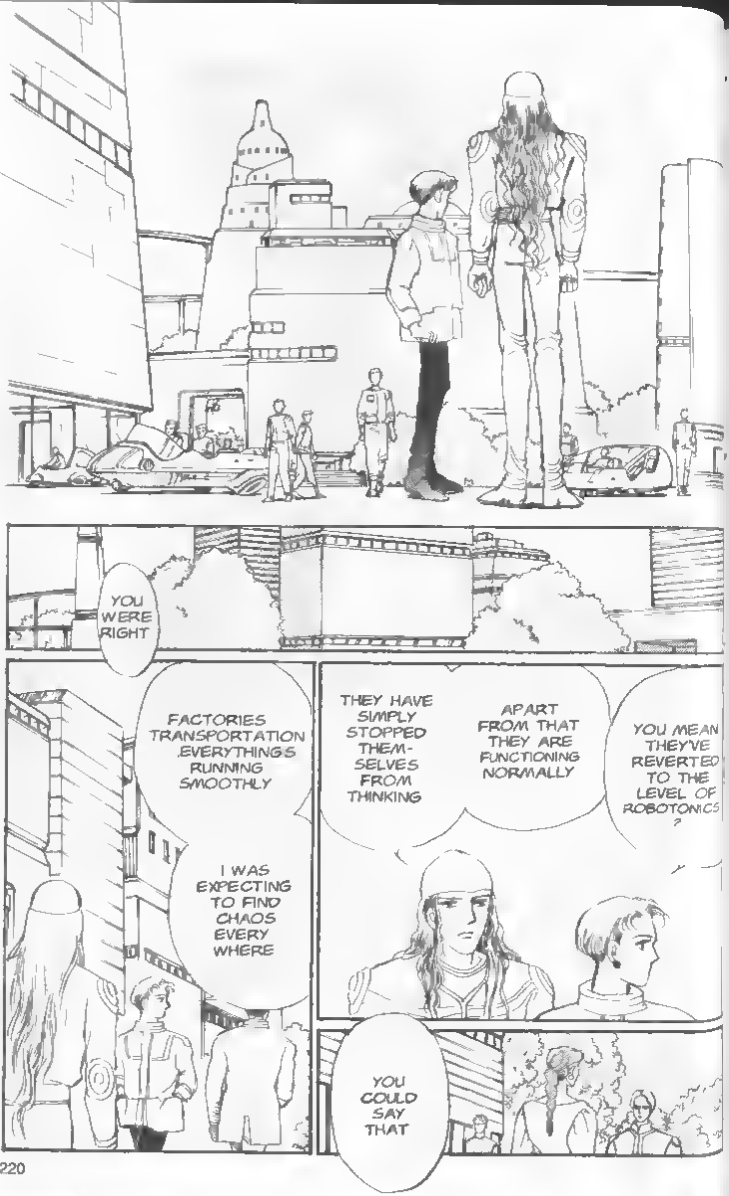
WHY?
WE CANNOT RESIST THE NOBLE RACE.
HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU!? WE'RE NOT LIKE THE NOBLE RACE OF ILIDOM!
WE AREN'T GOING TO MAKE UNREASONABLE DEMANDS OF YOU
WELL, SHE DOES MORE THAN JUST TALK IN THE EVENT THAT ANYTHING SHOULD HAPPEN TO ME. SHE IS QUALIFIED TO TAKE OVER AND CARRY OUT THE MISSION HERSELF
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
EVEN SO, YOU ARE THE NOBLE RACE
WE HAVE CONCLUDED THAT WE CAN NOT COEXIST WITH THE NOBLE RACE.
I'M AFRAID I'M GOING TO HAVE TO BLOW UP THIS SHIP
WHY DON'T YOU ASK HER WHAT SHE DID THE MOMENT YOU INVADED THE SHIP?
WHAT DID YOU DO?
I'LL WAIT THREE MINUTES. PLEASE GO BACK TO ILIDOM IN THE SHUTTLE
NOW JUST A MIN UTE!!
HOLD IT, SEPHI-LOTH.
A MIND-SHIP IS ONE HELL OF AN ABLE ASSISTANT
YOU FOUND THAT OUT FOR YOURSELF WHEN YOU TALKED TO MIZZ.
YES
I ASSUMED SOMETHING UNFORESEEN HAD HAPPENED TO LIN, SO I PLACED ALL THE INFORMATION WE'VE GATHERED SO FAR INTO A POD AND LAUNCHED IT
TOWARDS EARTH
VIA DELTA JUNCTION, TO BE PRECISE

IN THAT CASE
THERE WOULDN'T BE ANY POINT IN OVERHEATING MY ENERGY CONVERTER, WOULD THERE?
OVER-HEAT-ING YOUR WHAT?
LIN
I'VE BEEN SCANNING HIM SINCE HE CAME ABOARD
IT SEEMS HE'S NOT A HUMAN BEING
HE'S NOT HOMO SAPIEN IF THAT'S WHAT YOU MEAN
NO, HE'S NOT OF COURSE, BUT I'M NOT SURE HE'S EVEN A LIVING BEING
WHAT DID YOU SAY!?
HIS SKELETON IS COMPOSED OF CALCIUM
AND HIS INTERNAL ORGANS AND MUSCLES SEEM TO BE ARTIFICIAL
BUT HIS NERVOUS SYSTEM AND PART OF HIS SKIN ARE ALIVE MY GUESS IS THAT THE BRAIN THAT'S CONNECTED TO HIS LIVING NERVOUS SYSTEM.
IS A BIOTRON COMPUTER I CAN'T SAY FOR SURE, THOUGH.
DO YOU MEAN HE'S A ROBOT?
ASK HIM I'VE TOLD YOU EVERY THING MY SCANNERS HAVE TOLD ME
WE EACH HAVE A HUMAN NERVOUS SYSTEM THAT IS CULTIVATED FOR TEN MONTHS IN AN ARTIFICIAL WOMB
THAT NERVOUS SYSTEM'S GENES COME FROM THE INDIVIDUAL'S PARENTS, HALF FROM EACH PARENT
WHAT ABOUT THE REST? I MEAN BESIDES THE NERVOUS SYSTEM?
IT IS JUST AS MIZZ TOLD YOU.
AND YOUR BRAIN? YOUR BRAINS ARE CULTIVATED, TOO, AREN'T THEY?
IF THEY WERE WE WOULD INHERIT THE ESSENCE OF THE NOBLE CLASS!

THAT ESSENCE THAT MAKES EACH MEMBER OF THE NOBLE RACE A SOLIPSISTIC ENTITY INHABITING ITS OWN EGO UNIVERSE
IF WE WERE TO BECOME LIKE THAT, WHO WOULD MAINTAIN ILIDOM'S SOCIETY?
— THEN YOU ARE ALL ROBOTS CREATED BY THE PEOPLE OF ILIDOM, AREN'T YOU?
IF THAT'S TRUE
YOU MEAN ROBOT-ONICS?
WE ARE NOT ROBOT ONICS
IF YOUR BRAINS ARE ARTIFICIAL, YOU'RE ROBOTS!
ARE YOUR BRAINS BIOTRON COMPUTERS?
YE

NOW IT ALL MAKES SENSE
NOW I SEE WHAT THE SOURCE OF YOUR DILEMMA IS!
"INSTINCT"?
IT'S THE "INSTINCT" OF A ROBOT THAT CANNOT RESIST SUBMITTING TO HUMAN BEINGS
WHAT WE CALL THE "ASIMOV CIRCUIT"
EVERY ROBOT IS EQUIPPED WITH ONE IN ORDER TO PREVENT IT FROM ENDANGERING HUMAN BEINGS INSPIRED BY THE OLD "FRANKENSTEIN COMPLEX."
BUT WE DON'T HAVE A CIRCUIT LIKE—
OH, NO MY TRANS-CIEVER.

JNANA! SENDOL!
I KNOW YOU'RE LISTENING! ANSWER ME!!
SEPHI-LOTH!?
I FORGOT ABOUT MY TRANS-CEIVER
THIS CONVERSATION WAS OVER HEARD BY EVERYONE!
TETHYS' DEATH REPRESENTED TO ME NOT ONLY HER DEATH, BUT THE DEATH OF HER ENTIRE RACE
PERHAPS IT EVEN REPRE SENTED THE LOSS OF OUR REASON FOR BEING
THE HORROR OF THAT KNOWLEDGE WAS TOO MUCH FOR ME TO BEAR, AND I SHUT MYSELF DOWN
SO ?
THEY DIDN'T KNOW
WHILE IT'S COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT WE TRANSFORMED OURSELVES INTO CYBORGS OVER THE CENTURIES WE ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT WE DESCENDED FROM THE NOBLE RACE
THEN
THEN THE OTHERS DOWN ON THE PLANET
IF WE ARE IN FACT DESCENDED FROM ROBOTS CREATED BY THE NOBLE RACE
THEN WE ARE MONSTERS WHO HAVE MURDERED OUR CREATORS!
THAT KNOWLEDGE IS TOO MUCH FOR US TO BEAR
YOU'RE BEARING UP PRETTY WELL
I COULDN'T BEAR IT AT THE TIME
SEPHILOTH! WE'VE GOT TO RETURN TO THE SURFACE IMMEDIATELY!
THERE'S NO NEED TO HURRY IT DOESN'T MATTER WHEN WE GO
YEARS FROM NOW DECADES FROM NOW


YOU WERE RIGHT
FACTORIES TRANSPORTATION EVERYTHINGS RUNNING SMOOTHLY
I WAS EXPECTING TO FIND CHAOS EVERY WHERE
THEY HAVE SIMPLY STOPPED THEM-SELVES FROM THINKING
APART FROM THAT THEY ARE FUNCTIONING NORMALLY
YOU MEAN THEY'VE REVERTED TO THE LEVEL OF ROBOTONICS ?
YOU COULD SAY THAT

A CONVENIENT ENOUGH RESPONSE, I SUPPOSE
WE ARE DESIGNED TO PROTECT OUR SOCIETY, NO MATTER WHAT THE CIRCUM-STANCES
THEY WON'T STAY THIS WAY FOREVER
EVENTUALLY, THEY'LL RETURN TO NORMAL, THE WAY YOU DID
MY CASE MAY HAVE BEEN SOMETHING OF A MIRACLE
TO ME, YOU WERE A LIVING, FULLY GROWN AND DEVELOPED TETHYS
THE MOMENT I SAW YOU, I WAS RELEASED FROM THE PARALYSIS HER DEATH INFLICTED ON ME
LET S HOPE THE OTHERS WILL BE PROVIDED WITH A SIMILAR OPPOR TUNITY
IN ANY EVENT, IT WILL REQUIRE A MINIMUM OF TIME

BUT THEY DON'T HAVE THAT TIME
BECAUSE THE POD MIZZ LAUNCHED WILL REACH EARTH VIA SUBSPACE WITHIN A FEW DAYS, WON'T IT?
OH, THAT
I'LL DISPOSE OF THAT
IF I SEND A SIGNAL TO DELTA JUNCTION VIA SUB-SPACE
THE COMPUTER WILL ERASE THE DATA AUTOMATICALLY
BUT CAN YOU—
OF COURSE I CAN THIS SITUATION QUALIFIES ILIDOM AS A CLASS "A" OFF-LIMITS PLANET
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
JUST LOOK AT THEM!

BEAUTIFUL, CAPABLE, AND PERFECTLY SUBMISSIVE SUBORDINATES!
THEY'RE THE DEVIL'S OWN TEMPTATION!
WHAT YOU'RE THINKING IS THAT WE, BY OUR VERY NATURE COULD CAUSE THE DOWNFALL OF THE HUMAN RACE
JUST AS THE NOBLE RACE OF ILIDOM, FREED OF ANY NEED TO LABOR OR THINK, EVENTUALLY BEGAN TO LIVE SOLELY BY THE PLEASURE PRINCIPLE
NO, THAT'S NOT WHAT I WAS THINKING
REGARDLESS OF YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE FORMER HUMAN INHABITANTS OF ILIDOM
THE REST OF HUMANITY HAS NO CLAIM WHATSOEVER OVER ILIDOM'S NEW RACE OF HUMAN BEINGS
AND IT'S MY OPINION THAT HUMAN BEINGS, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER OR NOT THEY HAVE A LEGITIMATE CLAIM ON SOMETHING, INVARIABLY GIVE IN TO TEMPTATION
BUT IF OUR ESSENCE IS TO SERVE?
IF THAT'S WHAT WE WERE CREATED FOR?

THAT'S SOMETHING YOUR PEOPLE WILL HAVE TO DECIDE FOR THEMSELVES
WHEN THEYVE REGAINED THE ABILITY TO MAKE SUCH A DECISION, THAT IS
THAT IS JUST
YOU ARE A FAIR PERSON
TAKE CARE, SEPHILOTH.
THERE'S NO NEED TO I'M IMMUNE TO DISEASE
OH YEAH, I FOR-GOT
I guess this person really may be a robot.
NOT AT ALL.
IT JUST SEEMS TO ME THAT IT WOULD BE BEST FOR EARTH TO HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH YOUR PEOPLE FOR AWHILE
PARTICU LARLY WHEN I LOOK AT YOU, SEPHI-LOTH.
I WORRY THAT HOMO SAPIENS MAY BE NO MATCH FOR YOUR PEOPLE
?
I MAY BE A ROBOT, BUT I DON'T THINK I'M A RUN-OF THE MILL ROBOT
EVEN SO, NOT MUCH OF MY ALLOTTED LIFESPAN REMAINS
OH, THAT'S RIGHT! AND I WAS THINKING ILIDOM WOULD BE SAFE AS LONG AS YOU WERE HERE TO WATCH OVER IT
HA HA HA!
WELL, I'M GOING BACK TO THE SHIP AND SEND THAT SIGNAL TO THE POD
THERE'S NO NEED TO WORRY ABOUT ILIDOM. IT WILL STAY THIS WAY FOR DECADES FOR CENTURIES
BUT I...
I WAS HOPING TO SEE A REAL HUMAN SOCIETY JUST ONCE BEFORE I DIE
A SOCIETY OF PEOPLE LIKE YOU, LIN!

NOW, WAIT A SECOND, SEPH—
LIN! PLEASE TAKE ME TO EARTH WITH YOU!
I CAN'T DO THAT! HUMANOID ROBOTS ARE ILLEGAL ON EARTH!
ILLEGAL?
THEY'RE FORBIDDEN BECAUSE THEY CAUSE SO MUCH TROUBLE!
I SEE BUT I THINK I COULD PASS FOR A HUMAN BEING
ON EARTH, A PERSON WITHOUT AN ID NUMBER IS LIKE A PERSON WITHOUT A FACE!
YOU CAN'T ENTER A PLANET OR CITY ANYWHERE WITHOUT ONE
WHAT!?
COULD I USE MY ILIDOM CITIZEN'S NUMBER?
OFF-LIMITS OR NOT, YOUR REPORT WILL MAKE ILIDOM A FORMALLY RECOGNIZED PLANET, AND IF ILIDOM EXISTS, THEN AN EXILE FROM ILIDOM CAN EXIST
AN EXILE!?
IF EARTH IS OUT OF THE QUESTION, THEN SOMEPLACE ELSE
ANYWHERE THAT PEOPLE LIVE!
AND IF I EVER BECOME A HINDRANCE TO YOUR WORK
YOU CAN THROW ME OUT INTO SPACE
N-NO!
I'M APPROACHING THE END OF MY LIFESPAN ANY WAY — I DON'T MIND
SEPHILOTH
YES?
YOU'VE CONVINCED ME THAT YOU'RE NO RUN-OF THE-MILL ROBOT
BEEP
THANK YOU

THE END

SINCE YOU'VE BEEN GONE

STORY & ART BY
KEIKO NISHI

MANAMI?
IT'S ME
ANYTHING HAPPEN WHILE I'VE BEEN GONE?
I'LL BE TAKING THE THREE O'CLOCK TRAIN HOME TODAY
SEE YOU THEN

THAT TICKLES, YOU LITTLE !!
OH, REALLY?

DON'T GO HOME
DON'T BE STUPID BACK HOME, I'M A MARRIED MAN AND A CHEMISTRY PROFESSOR.
PUT YOURSELF IN MY SHOES LYING TO MY WIFE, TELLING HER THAT I'M ON A BUSINESS TRIP, FOOLING AROUND BEHIND HER BACK...

SO WHY'D YOU GET INVOLVED WITH ME?!
HMPH
BECAUSE YOU HAPPENED TO BE SITTING IN THAT SEAT AT THAT BAR ON THAT NIGHT END OF EXPLANA TION

HAHH

BESIDES, YOU'RE PROBABLY BRAGGING ABOUT IT TO YOUR FRIENDS AT THAT TWO YEAR COLLEGE OF YOURS, AREN'T YOU?
ABOUT HOW YOU PICKED UP THIS GREAT GUY WHILE WORKING AS A "COMPANION"?

YEAH, SOME GREAT GUY!
YOU ONLY VISIT ONE DAY A MONTH, AND IT'S NOT LIKE YOU EVER TAKE ME ANYWHERE

MICHIO...
DO YOU REALLY CARE ABOUT ME?
I CARE ENOUGH TO BUY YOU THIS CONDO, DON'T I?
WELL WHO DO YOU CARE ABOUT MORE, YOUR WIFE OR ME?
YOU SOUND LIKE A KID
NEVER ASK A MAN THAT IT'S LIKE SAYING, WHO DO YOU LOVE MORE? MOMMY OR DADDY?
YEAH, BUT...
THIS CONDO'S TOO BIG...
TO WAIT IN ALL MONTH, JUST TO SPEND ONE DAY WITH YOU.
SQUEE
SO HAVE SOME FRIENDS OVER GET A ROOMMATE IF YOU WANT
THAT'S NOT WHAT I WANT!
YOU KNOW...
I HATE IT WHEN YOU'RE LIKE THIS.
I'M SORRY
HMPH
SO WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO TO MAKE IT UP TO YOU?
MAKE RESERVATIONS FOR US IN THE SAME OLD-AGE HOME
TWINS MENS
DON'T BE STUPID
RMBL
RMBL
RMBL
RMBL

DO YOU FEEL THAT? THE SHAKING?
I'M SCARED OF EARTH QUAKES
...
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE
TMP
TMP
WHOA.
THIS IS FOR REAL I'D BETTER PUT OUT THE PILOT LIGHT
RMBL RMBL RMBL
AHH !!
OH MY GOSH !!
IT'S REALLY BIG!
KSH
SH
IT'S ALL RIGHT! JUST GET UNDER THE BED!!
RMBL
RMBL
RMBL
KLIK
THIS JUST IN-- A STRONG EARTHQUAKE HAS JUST STRUCK THE TOKYO METROPOLITAN AREA. THE QUAKE'S EPICENTER IS REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN "K" CITY
RICHTER SCALE MEASUREMENTS FOR SURROUNDING AREAS ARE AS FOLLOWS 5 IN CHOSHI, 4 IN URAWA.
phew
"K" CITY?
THAT'S YOUR PLACE
MIKA.
THERE MIGHT BE AFTER SHOCKS, SO GET READY TO EVACUATE
YOU'RE GOING HOME!?
AND LEAVING ME HERE!?
YEAH.
YEAH.

IF IT WAS THIS BAD HERE, 'K' CITY MUST HAVE REALLY BEEN HIT HARD
BUT THERE'S NO POINT IN LEAVING NOW, ANYWAY THE TRAINS WON'T BE RUNNING
JUST STAY A LITTLE WHILE LONGER.
PLEASE
AH!
MRS KUROSAWA!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING!? HURRY UP AND LET'S EVACUATE TO THE ELEMEN TARY SCHOOL!
I'LL BE RIGHT THERE
I CAN'T SEEM TO FIND MY PURSE
YOUR PURSE!? YOUR LIFE IS MORE IMPORTANT! COME ON NOW, HURRY!
eee-ohhh
eee-ohhh
MY PURSE
THE RED ONE.
WITH THE SILVER BELL

HEY
WANT TO SEE SOME PICTURES OF ME WHEN I WAS LITTLE?
YOU SHOWED ME BEFORE
NOT THOSE
THESE ARE DIFFERENT LOOK. THIS IS WHEN WE WENT TO AKIYOSHIDAI
I'VE REALLY GOT TO GO
I'M WORRIED ABOUT THE SCHOOL, TOO
ARE SANDWICHES OKAY FOR LUNCH?
THE BREAD'S A LITTLE DRIED OUT HOPE YOU DON'T MIND
IT'S THREE DAYS OLD HA, HA, HA.
MICHIO, COULD YOU MAKE THE COFFEE?

THIS IS AN OFFICIAL ANNOUNCE MENT
ALL CIVILIANS WHO HAVE NOT YET EVACUATED MUST DO SO IMMEDIATELY
DUE TO POSSIBLE FIRE AND AFTER SHOCKS THIS AREA IS EXTREMELY DANGEROUS
DO NOT I REPEAT DO NOT RETURN TO YOUR HOMES
IT'S NOT HERE
WHERE DID I PUT IT?

PLEASE EVACUATE IMMEDIATELY
THIS IS AN OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT
DOESN'T LOOK LIKE IT TASTES ALL RIGHT
NO, REALLY IT'S DELICIOUS
TASTE ALL RIGHT?
HM?
OH, YEAH.

IT'S DELICIOUS, BUT...
FORGET ABOUT IT
FORGET ABOUT YOUR WIFE!
THAT'S WHY YOU COME TO VISIT ME, ISN'T IT?
I MEAN.. EVERY TIME YOU COME HERE, YOU COMPLAIN ABOUT HER
"SHE'S A BITCH" "I PICKED A REAL LOSER"
"I DON'T KNOW WHAT SHE WANTS" THAT KIND OF THING
Ah...
IF SHE'S SUCH A BITCH...
...JUST DON'T BOTHER WITH HER
YOU HAVE ME
RIGHT? ♡

OH, COME ON, MICHIO! YOU REALLY ARE TOO SERIOUS, YOU KNOW THAT?
LET'S HAVE FUN! FORGET ABOUT SCHOOL! FORGET ABOUT YOUR HOME!
This is why Mika is so easy to get along with.
She's always so clear about what she wants
Where did I ever get the idea to marry her, anyway?
If I remember correctly...
3の5研究室
教授 田部井文
Laboratory 3-5
Prof. Fumio Tabei
Hmm.
Maybe that's why...
..it turned out like this.
"The will of the gods," as they say
YEAH A THREE-DAY, TWO NIGHT SKIING TRIP SO THAT SEMINAR MEMBERS CAN GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER BETTER
SOUNDS GOOD TO ME!
WHAT DO YOU THINK? SHOULD WE GO?
Manami.
Maybe we were never really meant for each other.
Every time we talk, we end up fighting.

MICHIO, YOU'RE GOING, TOO, AREN'T YOU?
YEAH, YOU CAN DRIVE US IN YOUR BMW
DIBS ON MICHIO'S PASSENGER SEAT!
SILENCE, YOU SHAMELESS HUSSY!
ARE YOU GOING, KUROSAWA, OR AREN'T YOU?
WELL SURE I GUESS SO
'WELL, SURE I GUESS SO' WHOOPEE
UH-OH. THAT MEANS WE'RE SHORT ONE GIRL
MANAMI, DO YOU HAVE PLANS FOR NEXT WEEKEND?
NO
NO I DON'T

WHAT'RE YOU ASKING HIM TO COME FOR?
SHE'S SITTING RIGHT THERE. YOU EXPECT ME TO JUST IGNORE HER?
LOL
SEE? I COULD HAVE TOLD YOU IT WOULD TURN OUT LIKE THIS
THIS IS THE PITS.

MANAMI?
WOULD YOU LIKE SOME CAKE? IT'S VERY GOOD
THANKS, I WILL.
WHY?
I heard she's in danger of not graduating.
She sure doesn't look that way.
THERE ARE A LOT OF THINGS I WANT TO FORGET
..BUT IT'S ALWAYS THOSE THINGS THAT ARE THE HARDEST TO FORGET
SO I AT LEAST TRY TO AVOID REMEMBER ING THEM.
YOU'RE ALWAYS THINKING ABOUT SOME THING, AREN'T YOU, MANAMI?
WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT?
I'M NOT SURE I UNDER STAND
BUT CAN A PERSON LIVE WITHOUT THINKING?
IT'S THE OTHER WAY AROUND HUMAN BEINGS CAN'T GO ON LIVING IF THEY THINK.
HM?
IT'S BETTER THAT YOU DON'T UNDER- STAND FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE, IF POSSIBLE
..
OOH, THIS CAKE REALLY IS GOOD
MICHIO, WANT TO PLAY "UNO"?
I'M NOT REALLY THINKING ABOUT ANYTHING
THAT IS..
..I'M TRYING NOT TO THINK ABOUT ANYTHING

After we were married
I learned that just before she entered college, Manami was responsible for a car accident.
Her boyfriend, sitting next to her in the passenger seat, died in the crash.
MICHIO, YOU'RE NOT TRYING TO PICK UP MANAMI ANNO, ARE YOU?
TAKE MY ADVICE AND FORGET IT SHE'S A LITTLE WEIRD
YEAH, DON'T LE HER LOO FOOL YOU!
Maybe they're right.
--Two days later--
WHAT!?
MICHIO'S CAR WON'T START!?

I'M REALLY SORRY ABOUT THIS.
REALLY!? WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO!?
YOU GIRLS CAN RIDE IN OUR CARS IT'S TOO COLD TO STAND AROUND
BESIDES, YOU CAN MAKE A CALL AND HAVE SOMEONE COME FIX IT, RIGHT, KUROSAWA?
THAT'S TRUE
WELL, SORRY TO LEAVE YOU LIKE THIS, MICHIO
OOH, IT'S FREEZING

I kind of felt like crying

We walked in the snow without saying a word

I fixed the car and the next day Manami and I drove back to Tokyo.

When I embraced Manami, I thought I was embracing all of her, including her sadness.

But maybe that was nothing more than some kind of sympathy that seemed a lot like love

If that's true..
..can I just keep on--
--MICHIO?
MICHIO?
I GUESS HE FELL ASLEEP
HM? NO, I'M AWAKE
WHAT TIME IS IT?
MICHIO_
LET'S GO_
_SOME-PLACE FAR AWAY

HEY!!
ON THE SECOND FLOOR!!
WHA
TMP TMP TMP
WHAT'S THE PROBLEM MA'AM!? WHY ARE YOU STILL HERE!?
ALL THE RESIDENTS OF THIS AREA HAVE EVACUATED TO THE ELEMEN TARY SCHOOL
COME ON, NOW WE'LL DRIVE YOU THERE!

UMM.. I CAN'T FIND IT
I CAN'T FIND THE PURSE MY HUSBAND GAVE ME.
YOU CAN BUY ANOTHER PURSE!! NOW, LET'S GO!!

BUT..
..THAT PURSE IS VERY IMPORTANT TO ME
ONE TIME, WHEN WE WERE ON VACATION..
..I DIDN'T SAY A WORD, BUT HE BOUGHT ME THE ONE I LIKED BEST
SINCE THEN, I'VE NEVER ONCE THOUGHT OF ASKING MY HUSBAND TO BUY ME ANYTHING ELSE

IT'S VERY IMPORTANT
I'D LIKE TO LOOK FOR IT JUST A LITTLE LONGER
WELL.. WE'LL WAIT FIVE MORE MINUTES BUT HURRY!
I WILL
KRAK!
TUMP
AH!!
LOOK OUT!! THE WALL--

I TURNED THE GAS OFF.

NOW I JUST HAVE TO TURN THE ELEC-TRICITY OFF

PATTER PATTER

OH! THERE ARE A FEW COOKIES LEFT.

YOU DON'T THINK WE'LL NEED TRAIN RESERV.-TIONS AT THIS TIME OF DAY, DO YOU?

YOU ACT LIKE A KID GETTING READY FOR A FIELD TRIP

I GUESS I DO, DON'T I?

BUT IT'S NOT QUITE THE SAME

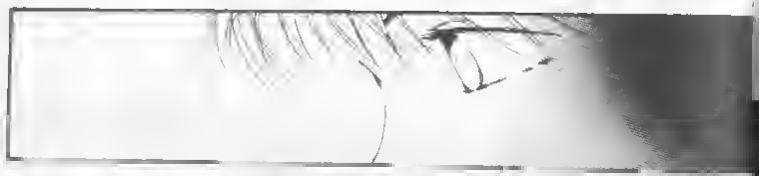
THIS IS ONE FIELD TRIP.

..WE DON'T HAVE TO COME HOME FROM.

That's right.

I'll never have to go home again.
I'll be on my "business trip" for all eternity
MICHIO, DO YOU HAVE A TELEPHONE CARD?
I NEED TO MAKE A CALL TO JUST ONE FRIEND

YEAH
HOLD ON



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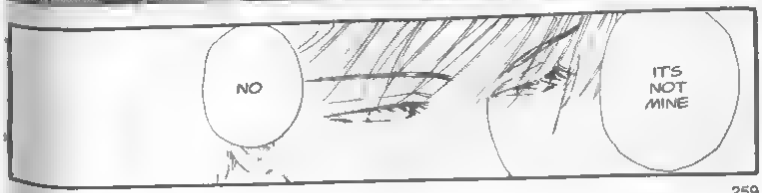
TING TING
OH, HOW CUTE.
BUT IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S READY TO FALL APART IS THAT YOURS?


NO
IT'S NOT MINE

I...
...BOUGHT IT FOR HER
LONG BEFORE I MET YOU
I GUESS I GRABBED THE WRONG COIN PURSE WHEN I LEFT THE HOUSE YESTERDAY
SHE'LL BECOME HYSTERICAL IF I DON'T RETURN IT RIGHT AWAY
I'M SORRY
...
THAT'S ALL RIGHT
A JERK LIKE YOU, MICHIO...
I'LL FORGET YOU JUST LIKE THAT!

I'm coming home, Manami.

My business trip... is over.

THE END